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SERMONS

Preach'd upon

Several Occasions.

Some of which were never before Printed.

By W. Sherlock, D. D. Dean of St. *Paul's*, Master of the *Temple*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty.

LONDON,

Printed for *William Rogers* at the *Sun* over-against St. *Dunstan's* Church in *Fleetstreet*. 1700.

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TO THE

READER.

ALL the Account I have to give of publiſhing this Volume of Sermons, is only this; that moſt of them were printed before by public Authority, or by ſuch Applications as to me were equivalent to Commands: And my Bookſeller having a mind to reprint thoſe Sermons which he had an intereſt in, deſired me to add ſome few more, to make a juſt Volume: The choice I have made of ſuch as I have added, was not for the ſake of any curious Compoſition, or new Con-

Conceits, much leſs for Wit and Satyr; But I choſe ſuch as I hoped might be moſt uſeful in ſuch an Age as this; And if they ſhall do any good, which I heartily beg of God they may, I have all that I aimed at.

Will. Sherlock.

ERRATA.

PAge 25. line 3. for *been treated*, read *be entreated*, p. 44. l. *indiſpeſanble* r. *indiſpenſible*. p. 46. l. 27. f. *ower*, r. *our*. p. 193. l. ult. for *in* r. *and* p. 239. l. 18. *ovrɛiσλαx]ᾳ*. p. 404. l. 21. f. *they*. r. *the*. p. 413. l. 3. f. *whensoever*, r. *whencesoever*. p. 485. l. 8. f. *nor*, r. *not*. p. 526. l. 3. r. *one thing*. r. *Sermon* 18 *instead of* 19.

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Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; that put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter. Wo unto them that are wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own ſight. The

To the Right Honourable,

Sir *John Chapman*,

LORD-MAYOR

OF THE

City of LONDON.

My Lord,

IN *obedience to the Order I received from your Lordſhip and the Court of Aldermen, I Preſent you with this plain Sermon; the whole Deſign of which is, not to debate any thing, nor to determine on which ſide the Truth lies, in thoſe warm Diſputes which have been among us; but to convince all thoſe, who* Love and Pray for the Peace of Jeruſalem, *how many Controverſies there are, which ſhould be laid aſide without Diſputing, and how a little condeſcention to each other, may either happily Unite us into one Communion, or at leaſt Teach us to Live together in Love and Charity, notwithſtanding ſome different Apprehenſions of Things; and I*

hope ſo Charitable a Deſign as this, will raiſe no new Diſputes and Quarrels among us.

That GOD would preſerve his Church, reſtore Peace and Unity among Chriſtians, bleſs this Great and Populous City, and direct your Lordſhip in the Government of it, in theſe difficult Times, is the hearty Prayer of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt Obedient Servant,

WILL. SHERLOCK.

SER-

SERMON I.

Preach'd before the Lord-Mayor, at *Guildhall-Chappel*, on *Sunday*, *November* 4. 1688.

CXXII. PSALM 6, 7.

Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love Thee. Peace be within thy Walls, and Proſperity within thy Palaces.

THough the particular time and occaſion of Penning this *Pſalm* is uncertain, yet ſo much is plain, that it was after *David* had ſetled the Ark at *Jeruſalem*, and made that City the place of God's Houſe, and of Religious Worſhip, and the Seat of Juſtice and Judgment. There was the Houſe of God, *verſe* 9. that is, though the Temple was not yet built, if this *Pſalm* was compoſed by *David*, as the Title of it ſignifies it was, yet there was

the Tabernacle and the Ark of God, which formerly was in *Shiloh*, and afterwards removed from one place to another, till *David* ſetled it in *Jeruſalem*: Thither all the Tribes of *Iſrael* were to reſort three times a year to worſhip God before the Ark of the Teſtimony, 4 *ver.* There was the Imperial Seat, where *David* had built his Throne and Palace, and where his Poſterity were to dwell and govern *Iſrael*; and therefore it was the Seat of Juſtice too, as that muſt be, where the Kings Throne and the Houſe of God was placed. *There are ſet thrones of judgment, the thrones of the houſe of David*, 5. *ver.* Theſe were the peculiar Privileges of *Jeruſalem*, above any other City in *Jury*. This was the reaſon of that peculiar affection and paſſionate concern, which *David* had himſelf, and exhorts all others to expreſs for *Jeruſalem*, that he greatly rejoiced to go thither, and to continue there. *I was glad when they ſaid unto me, Let us go into the houſe of the Lord; our feet ſhall ſtand within thy gates, O Jeruſalem.* That he exhorts all people to pray for the peace and proſperity of *Jeruſalem*, and promiſes a Bleſſing to thoſe who love

it;

it; as it is in my Text, *Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love thee; peace be within thy walls, and proſperity within thy palaces.* All this was not for the ſake of the material Buildings, the beauty of the place, or the conveniency of its ſcituation, but becauſe it was the Center of Unity; *Which is builded as a City that is compact together, whither the Tribes go up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Teſtimony of Iſrael, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord,* 3. & 4. ver. Which ſhews in what reſpect he commends *Jeruſalem*, that it *is built as a City, which is compact together*; not with regard to the Uniformity and regular Order and Union of its material Buildings, but that it was the Center of a Religious Unity and Order in Worſhip, where all the Tribes of *Iſrael* met and united in the ſame Acts of Worſhip and Praiſe to God. There was the Houſe of God, there were the ſet Thrones of Judgment. So that to Love *Jeruſalem*, to Pray for the Peace and Proſperity of it, is to love the Houſe, the Worſhip, the Name of God; to love and pray for the Unity, Happineſs, and Proſperity of the Church,

for the flouriſhing State of Religion, and the peaceful Opportunities of Worſhipping God in his Holy Temple, together with the equal and impartial Adminiſtration of Juſtice, which is ſo much for the Publick Good, to promote the Temporal and Eternal Happineſs of Men, that our Love to Mankind, but eſpecially our Love to the Brethren, as well as our Zeal for God's Glory and Worſhip, requires this of us; *For my Brethren and Companions ſake, I will now ſay, Peace be within thee: Becauſe of the Houſe of the* LORD *our* GOD, *I will ſeek thy good*, v. 8, 9.

Thus I have given you a very plain and eaſy Expoſition of this whole *Pſalm*, and therein have ſufficiently Explained my Text. I have but one thing more to add, to make way for my intended Diſcourſe, and that is, to ſhew you, that this Exhortation does directly, and not merely by Accommodation and Analogy concern Us, as well as it did the *Jews*.

For *Jeruſalem* was but a Type of the Chriſtian Church, as the carnal *Iſrael*, or the carnal Seed and Poſterity of *Abraham* were of true and ſincere Chriſtians, who are the Children of *Abra-*

Abraham, by Faith in Chriſt: And therefore St. *Paul* expreſly diſtinguiſhes between the earthly *Jeruſalem*, and the *Jeruſalem* which deſcends from above, 4. Gal. 25, 26. *For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to Jeruſalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her Children; but Jeruſalem which is above,* (or from above, that is, the Chriſtian Church) *is free, which is the Mother of us all.* Which in 12. *Heb.* 22. he calls *Mount Sion, the city of the living* GOD, *the heavenly Jeruſalem.* And 3. *Rev.* 12. it is called, *The city of* GOD, *the new Jeruſalem, which cometh down out of heaven from* GOD. And 21. *Rev.* 2. *The new Jeruſalem coming down out of heaven from* GOD, *prepared as a bride adorned for her huſband:* Which is a Deſcription of the moſt reformed and purified ſtate of the Chriſtian Church on Earth. So that this Exhortation, To *Pray for the Peace of Jeruſalem*, does moſt properly belong to Chriſtians, becauſe the Chriſtian Church is the true *Jeruſalem*, the new, the holy *Jeruſalem*, deſcending out of Heaven from GOD, *v.* 10.

By this time, I ſuppoſe, you underſtand the meaning of my Text, and

how much we are concerned in it; and there are two parts observable in the words: 1. The Duty to *Pray for the Peace of Jeruſalem*, or of the Chriſtian Church; *Peace be within thy Walls, and Proſperity within thy Palaces.* 2. The Encouragement to this, *They ſhall proſper that love thee.*

It is the firſt of theſe I ſhall at preſent ſpeak to, The Duty to *Pray for the Peace of Jeruſalem*; wherein I ſhall conſider two things.

1. What we muſt Pray for.

2. How neceſſary Prayer is, to obtain theſe Bleſſings.

I. What we muſt pray for: *Peace* and *Proſperity*. *Peace be within thy Walls, and Proſperity within thy Palaces.*

Now the Peace of the Church ſignifies two things:

1. The Unity and Agreement of Chriſtians among themſelves.

2. The Preſervation of the Church from external Oppreſſions and Perſecutions.

1. The Unity and Agreement of Chriſtians among themſelves: When they profeſs the ſame Faith, and join in the ſame Worſhip; when they love like Brethren, and have a tender affe-

ction

ction and ſympathy for each other, as Members of the ſame Body: This all Chriſtians confeſs to be a great and neceſſary Duty, and pretend to lament the many ſcandalous Diſſentions and Diviſions of the Chriſtian Church.

This I am ſure, that though Diviſions and Diſſentions are deſtructive to all Societies, yet there is no Society ſuffers ſo much by it as the Chriſtian Church: This deſtroys Love and Charity, which is the true Spirit of the Goſpel, and the Badge and Cognizance of our Profeſſion; *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* This turns the Chriſtian Church into a School of wrangling Diſputes, and makes men more concerned what they believe, than how they live; this gives great offence to the World, repreſenting the Chriſtian Faith as very doubtful and uncertain, and Chriſtianity it ſelf as a great Diſturber of the Peace of Mankind; this overthrows all Government and Diſcipline in the Church, and makes its Cenſures deſpiſed and ſcorned, when the moſt profligate Sinners can ſhelter themſelves in a Schiſm, and palliate or expiate their other Crimes by a factious

ous Zeal; and therefore, if ever we deſire to ſee Chriſtianity flouriſh, we muſt Pray heartily for Peace and Unity among Chriſtians.

But that we may the better underſtand what we are to Pray for, let us briefly enquire wherein the Unity of the Church conſiſts; and that is in the Unity of Faith, the Unity of Communion, and the Unity of Love and Charity.

1*ſt*. Unity of Faith: Whereby I do not underſtand, that all Chriſtians muſt agree in all the Opinions and Speculations of Religion; it would be well if it could be ſo; but this can never be, while men have ſuch different Underſtandings and Abilities, ſuch different Skill and Opportunities of enquiry; but the Unity of Faith is ſecured by an Agreement in all the Fundamental Articles of Religion, though a little varied in ſome nicer Speculations; which are like the different Features in mens Faces, which diſtinguiſh them from one another, but do not alter the Human Shape: And this is the difference between the Diſputes which divide Papiſts and Proteſtants, and the Diſputes of Proteſtants among themſelves:

ſelves: The firſt ſubvert the Foundations of Chriſtian Faith and Worſhip, and therefore theſe Differences can never be Accommodated and Reconciled; they will not part with their Errors, and we muſt not embrace them, if we love our Souls; for as dear a thing as Peace is, we muſt not part with Truth for Peace. But now the Diſputes among all that are allowed to be Proteſtants, whatever miſtakes there may be on any ſide, do not overthrow any neceſſary Article of the Chriſtian Faith; and therefore the Unity of the Faith may be ſecured amidſt all theſe Diſputes. Some of theſe Diſputes are only inconvenient Modes of ſpeaking, and the difference is only in Words, when both Parties really mean the ſame thing; which, I believe, if all Heat and Paſſion were laid aſide, would in a great meaſure appear to be the true State of that Proteſtant Controverſy about Juſtification by Faith alone. Others are mere Philoſophical Diſputes, in which the Chriſtian Faith is not peculiarly concerned, for they have been, and are diſputed in all Religions; ſuch as the Controverſy about God's Eternal Decrees, and the Power and Efficacy

of

of Nature and Grace; which is only a reviving of that old Philoſophical Diſpute about Neceſſity and Fate, and God's concourſe with ſecond Cauſes to produce their Effects. And thus it is in ſome other Caſes. Now methinks ſuch Diſputes as theſe, which do not properly belong to the Chriſtian Faith, ſhould not divide the Chriſtian Church: Let men diſpute about them as Philoſophers; but as Chriſtians, let it ſuffice them to believe what Chriſt and his Apoſtles have plainly taught us; t at is enough to carry us to Heaven; and methinks it ſhould be enough to make us agree in the Way thither.

As to Explain this more particularly, but very briefly: There is no good Proteſtant but will confeſs, That we are Juſtified only by the Merits of CHRIST's Death and Sacrifice, as the only Expiation and Atonement for our Sins. That no works of Righteouſneſs which we can do, can make Satisfaction to God for our Sins, nor merit Eternal Life, which is the Gift of God. That Chriſt is our only Saviour, and that he is the Saviour only of his Body or Church. That we are incorporated into the Body of Chriſt,

and

and put into a ſtate of Juſtification, by Faith and the Chriſtian Sacraments. That no impenitent unreformed Sinner, though he do profeſs to believe in Chriſt, and be baptized, ſhall be ſaved by Him; and therefore though Repentance and a Holy Life do not merit the Pardon of Sin, nor Eternal Rewards, yet they are neceſſarily required in all thoſe who ſhall be forgiven and ſaved by Chriſt. This I ſay, all good *Proteſtants* agree in, and all this is plainly taught in Scripture; and whoever believes this, and practiſes accordingly, ſhall certainly be ſaved: And what need is there then of reducing all this into Artificial Schemes, wherein Mens Fancies and Conceits differ? What neceſſity is there of diſputing what the Office of Faith, or what the Efficacy of Works is in our Juſtification, when we all agree that we are ſaved only by the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Chriſt through Faith in his Blood, and the Exerciſe of Repentance and a holy Life? To underſtand the reaſon and order of things, conduces much to the beauty and perfection of Chriſtian Knowledge; but Men may be ſaved, and the Peace of the Church better ſecured,

cured, without ſuch particular Determinations.

Thus all good *Proteſtants* agrée, that all God's Works are known to him from the foundation of the World: That Chriſt is *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*: That *God knows who are his*, and always did ſo: That *we are predeſtinated to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: That we are predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things according to the counſel of his own will*, 1. Epheſ. 5, 6, 11. That when God comes to judge the World, he will appear infinitely juſt, and good, and merciful: That bad men ſhall have no reaſon to complain of God, and that good men ſhall have nothing to arrogate to themſelves. This ſecures the Glory of God; of his Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, Power, and Soveraignty; and what need is there to enquire any farther into the Divine Decrees, than the Scripture has revealed; in the particular explication of which, when men follow their own Fan-

Fancies, they vaſtly differ from each other, to the great diſturbance of the Peace of the Church? We are aſſured by plain Teſtimonies of Scripture, That God deſires not the death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould return and live: That our deſtruction is of our ſelves: That all the good we do, is wholly owing to the Grace of God, *who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure:* That all the evil we do, is owing to our ſelves: That *every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed; then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin; and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* This we all agree in, and this attributts the glory of all the good we do, to God; and the ſhame of all the evil we do, to our ſelves; this encourages us to do good in a confident aſſurance of the Divine Grace; and teaches bad men, that they muſt not think to excuſe their wickedneſs by charging it on God: And this is all that is neceſſary for us to know, becauſe it is all that is needful to the purpoſes of Religion, and a holy Life.

But when men frame this into Philoſophical Hypotheſes, they then divide as

as far from each other, as *East* and *West*; and all the attempts of reconciling them is vain and fruitleſs, for there is no Medium to unite in. The only way to Peace, is to ſilence all theſe Diſputes, as matters which Mankind will never agree about, and wherein Religion is no more concerned, than the Government of Kingdoms or States; and on which the Salvation of our Souls no more depends, than the conduct of our Secular Affairs, or the preſervation of this Mortal Life: For the diſpute about Decrees; Predeſtination; God's Power over our Wills; how God and Creatures produce the ſame Effect; what belongs to God, and what belongs to the Creature in every Action, (*ſince in him we live and move*); concerns every thing elſe as well as Religion; and yet in all other caſes, men let Philoſophers diſpute theſe Points, and quietly go about their Buſineſs, and do what is fit to be done, as if there were no Controverſy about theſe matters; and I cannot imagine why they ſhould not do ſo in Religion too: Believe what is plainly taught, and do what is commanded; uſe the greateſt Wiſdom, and our utmoſt

moſt diligence in doing good, and depend upon the ſuccours of the Divine Grace, and leave theſe Diſputes to be decided at the day of Judgment, and that will decide them all. By this means I am ſure moſt of the Diſputes among *Proteſtants*, which have given the greateſt Diſturbance to the Church, would be for ever ſilenced, and Chriſtian Religion would not be clogged, nor reproached with ſuch Philoſophical Controverſies.

2*ly*, The Unity of Communion: and that conſiſts in our worſhipping God together: when we reſort to the ſame Church to offer up our united Prayers and Thankſgivings to God, and to partake of that holy Supper, which is the Sacrament and Symbol of our Union to Chriſt, and to each other: and this indeed is true Church-Unity, and it is greatly to be lamented, that men who profeſs the ſame Faith, and agree in all the Eſſentials of Worſhip, ſhould divide Communion, and refuſe to Pray together, and to Feaſt at the ſame holy Table of our Lord. We cannot indeed Communicate with the Church of *Rome*, becauſe they have corrupted the very Eſſentials of Chriſtian Wor-

ſhip. Moſt men do not underſtand their Prayers, and therefore cannot joyn in Prayer with them: they worſhip Images and Pictures, which is expreſly forbidden by the ſecond Commandment. Inſtead of praying to God in the Name of our only Mediator and Advocate Jeſus Chriſt, they have joyned other Interceſſors with him; pray to Saints and Angels, and the Virgin *Mary*, to pray for them, and help them. They worſhip the Hoſt, which we believe to be nothing but Bread and Wine as to the ſubſtance, and therefore no Object of Worſhip; and turn the Sacramental Feaſt of Chriſt's Body and Blood into a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Living and the Dead. Such a Worſhip as this we dare not joyn in, becauſe it is Sinful and Idolatrous. But the caſe is quite different among *Proteſtants*; they pray to the ſame God, in the only Name of the ſame Lord Jeſus Chriſt; put up the ſame Petitions, offer the ſame Thankſgivings and Praiſes, obſerve the ſame Divine Inſtitutions, without any eſſential change and alteration, and yet cannot worſhip God together; as if it were an impious thing to put up the ſame Prayers, and to offer

fer the ſame Praiſes to God in a pious, and grave, and well-compoſed Form of Words, which others do, it may be not ſo well and decently, in their conceived Prayers; as if the Devotion of the Communicant in receiving ſo ineſtimable a Bleſſing as the Sacramental Body and Blood of Chriſt upon his knees, were a prophanation of that Holy Feaſt; as if a white Linnen-Garment, which never underwent any Religious Conjurations, and is uſed only as a decent Habit, without any opinion of its Virtue or Sanctity, were a juſt reaſon to drive men out of the Church, from the Chriſtian Communion of Prayers and Sacraments. Theſe would be ſurprizing ſtories to any Chriſtians in the World, who had never heard before of ſuch Diſputes among us.

Pray give me leave to ſpeak my mind freely upon this occaſion. Upon the beſt and moſt impartial Inquiries and Obſervations I can make, I do in my Conſcience believe the Church of *England* to be the moſt Apoſtolical and beſt Reformed Church in the World: I ſee no reaſon from the nature of things to make any material Alte-

rations in her Doctrine, or Worſhip; and therefore, I confeſs, it has given me very juſt Reſentments to hear our Church charged with ſuch unjuſt Imputations of Popery, Superſtition, Idolatry, Will-worſhip, and what not, and to ſee a blind and furious Zeal ready to raze up the very Foundations of it. It has often grieved me to ſee ſuch a Church as this rent and torn by Schiſms, which a man of ordinary prudence might eaſily foreſee, would give great advantage to the common Enemy of the *Proteſtant* Faith. This and the care of mens Souls, and of their temporal Fortunes too, moved ſeveral Divines of this Church, when the Government thought fit to re-enforce the Laws of Uniformity, to examine and anſwer all the Arguments of our Diſſenting Brethren, which they performed with that good Temper, with that perſwaſiveneſs and ſtrength of Argument, as will be a Vindication of our Church to future Ages; and I wiſh it may upon ſecond thoughts, have yet a better effect upon thoſe, who were not then perſwaded: and this, I ſuppoſe, will not be called Perſecution, much leſs can the many kind Offices they did in keep-

keeping off Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures, be called a Perſecution.

And yet after all, when it is ſo apparent, that Prejudices are grown as obſtinate as they are unreaſonable; when not the reaſon of the thing, but the weakneſs of ſome, and the ill deſigns of others, require ſome compliance and condeſcenſion, we have reaſon to hope, that the *CHURCH of ENGLAND*, which at the beginning of the Reformation took ſuch prudent are not to offend the Papiſt by going farther from them, than was neceſſary, will whenever it is likely to do good, condeſcend a great deal farther, than it is neceſſary to Reform, to meet the Diſſenter; for while the external Decency, Gravity, and Solemnity of Worſhip is ſecured, no wiſe and good Man will think much to change a changeable Ceremony, when it will heal the Breaches and Diviſions of the Church: and let us all heartily Pray to GOD, that there may be this good and peaceable Diſpoſition of Mind in all Conformiſts and Non-conformiſts, towards a happy Re-union; and all conſidering Men will think it time to lay aſide ſuch little Diſputes, when it

is not merely the *Church of England*, nor any particular *Sect of Proteſtants*, whoſe Ruin is aimed at, but the whole *Proteſtant FAITH.*

3*ly*, Another kind of Unity is Love and Charity, and a mutual forbearance. This I confeſs is a very difficult thing, when the Diſpute runs ſo high as to divide Chriſtian Communion; for it ſeems in effect to declare Men to be Heathens and Publicans, when we refuſe to Worſhip GOD with them: and few Men can bear this, when ſo dear an Intereſt is concerned, as the Salvation of their Souls. And the truth is, that Forbearance St. *Paul* ſo often mentions, was to preſerve Men of different attainments, and different apprehenſions, in the Unity of the Church, not to countenance their Schiſms and Separations.

But yet, ſince we are fallen into ſuch unhappy Circumſtances, that a great many Men, whom we have reaſon to hope, are in other reſpects very good Chriſtians, and ſuch as our common Saviour will receive with all their Infirmities, are involved in a Schiſm, let us ſtill treat them as Chriſtian Brethren, pay all that Kindneſs and Reſpect

ſpect to them, which is due to the Members of Chriſt, to the Children of the ſame Father, and the Heirs of the ſame Promiſes.

The good Order and Government, and the wholeſome Laws and Conſtitutions of a Church, muſt not be preſently Sacrificed to the Scruples of every good, but it may be ignorant and indiſcreet Chriſtian; but yet in our Treatment of them, we muſt conſider, whether we have not reaſon to think, that Chriſt will own them with all their Faults; and if we have reaſon to believe, that Chriſt will own them, we ought alſo to own them, and pay ſuch Kindneſs to them as is due to all ſincere Chriſtians, tho under ſome Miſtakes.

Now I am very confident, after all the Heats that have been between the *Church of England* and Diſſenters, neither of them will Damn each other upon account of ſuch Differences as are between them: no *Church of England-man* will ſay, that to Pray Extempore, to Baptize without the Sign of the Croſs, to Officiate without a Surplice, to Receive the Sacrament Sitting, are damning Sins; and I believe there are very few, if any of our Diſſenters,

that will ſay, That the contrary Practiſe is Damning; and then there may be good Chriſtians on both ſides; and thoſe who are ſo, ought to love one another, as Members of the ſame Body of CHRIST, though divided in their external Communion by ſome unhappy Differences.

Schiſm indeed we do ſay, is a damning Sin; but there may be Diviſions where there is not always the guilt and formality of Schiſm; and we hope this is the Caſe of all good Men, who ſeparate from the Church, through ſome invincible Prejudices and Prepoſſeſſions.

This ſhews what great reaſon we have to love one another, notwithſtanding ſuch dividing Diſputes; but if we would practiſe this true Chriſtian Charity, we muſt take care, that theſe Differences do not grow up into perſonal Hatreds and Animoſities. Mens Opinions and Practices may differ, and while they diſpute fairly, they may be Friends ſtill; but when Self-love, Honour, Reputation, and Intereſt, is engaged in the Quarrel, this makes the Enmity mortal, and they muſt Ruin one another, though they both fall together. This I am ſure is

not

not the Zeal which deſcends from above, which is pure and peaceable, gentle and eaſy to been treated.

2. The Peace of the Church ſignifies its Preſervation from the Oppreſſion and Perſecution of its Enemies: For the Church never wants Enemies, though their Power be not always equal; and this, I preſume I need not perſwade you to Pray for, for you are all ſenſible what an advantage this is. There is none of you would chooſe Racks and Tortures, a Gibbet or a Stake, theſe are grievous things to Fleſh and Blood, the very thoughts of which make us tremble: though immortal Life, and the Joys and Pleaſures of GOD's Preſence, are an abundant Recompence for the loſs of this preſent Life, and all the Sufferings of this World; yet it is a very difficult Tryal, even to the beſt Men, who when they ſee it a coming, cannot but Pray with the Importunity of an Agony, as our SAVIOUR did, *Lord, let this Cup paſs from me.* Though good Men prefer their future Hopes before all preſent Things, yet their Life, their Eaſe, their Liberties, their Eſtates, are valuable things too, and all Men would

would be glad to get to Heaven without meeting with ſuch a Storm by the way.

Eſpecially if it be ſuch a Storm as threatens the very Ruin of the Church, and of the true Religion, to ſubvert the Faith of many profeſſed Chriſtians, to entail Ignorance, Infidelity, or monſtrous Errors on our Poſterity; in ſuch a caſe the love of our Religion, of our Country, of our Poſterity, will make us raiſe our Hearts and our Voices to Heaven, in our fervent and paſſionate Prayers *for the peace of Jeruſalem.* And if we do heartily *Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem*, methinks we ſhould not Sacrifice our Religion to private Animoſities: GOD forbid, were it in my power, and had I never ſo little kindneſs for Diſſenters, that I ſhould ever embrace any Propoſals which would Ruin all the Diſſenters in *England*, and the Proteſtant Religion into the bargain; and I doubt they are no Proteſtant Diſſenters who would be contented to Ruin the *CHURCH of ENGLAND*, though they introduce Popery, and ſet up the *Church of Rome* in its ſtead.

Thus I have ſhewn you, what that Peace

Peace is, which we muſt Pray for; and I need not add many words in the ſecond place, to ſhew you, how neceſſary Prayer is to obtain theſe Bleſſings; for not to inſiſt now on thoſe common Topicks, of the neceſſity of Prayer in general, and its Power and Efficacy to obtain our Requeſts of GOD; I ſhall deſire you only to conſider, that this Peace is ſuch a Bleſſing, as none but GOD can beſtow, and therefore we ought to pray for it.

1. As for Unity and Peace among our ſelves, this Saint *Paul* expreſly prays for, 15 *Rom.* 5, 6. *Now the God of patience and conſolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Chriſt Jeſus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* for it is God that maketh men to be of a mind. Whoever conſiders the unruly paſſions of men, their different capacities and underſtandings, and different intereſts, will not wonder that the beſt Arguments, and the moſt obliging Arts, do not always prevail; but God can ſtill our paſſions, enlighten our minds, over-rule our intereſts, remove our prejudices, and unite and reconcile the moſt

moſt diſtant perſons: and not to take notice now of that power he has over our Wills, and his immediate applications to our Minds and Spirits, he many times effects this by ſome external and viſible Providences. The Gaol and the Stake preſently reconciled the Differences between thoſe two excellent Biſhops and Martyrs, *RIDLEY* and *HOOPER*, who before diſputed fiercely about ſome Ceremonies, as we have done; and I pray God grant us ſo much Chriſtian prudence and temper, that we may not need ſuch means to reconcile us; and we have great reaſon to hope this, ſince the Divine Providence has in a great meaſure already removed the Prejudices on both ſides, and convinc'd us, that we are not at ſuch a diſtance from each other as our Enemies would have us, and as it may be, we thought our ſelves to be. Diſſenters, I hope, are by this time very well Satisfied, that the Church of *England* has no inclination to *Popery*; and we have reaſon to acknowledge, that the Body of Diſſenters (for ſome private Intriguers on either ſide do not deſerve our notice, nor to be thought on either ſide) have not ſuch an irre-

concileable

concileable Hatred to the Church of *England*, as to ſacrifice her to a *Popiſh* Intereſt; and this bids fair for a good Underſtanding between us; and let us pray to God to continue and perfect it.

2. As for the Preſervation of the Church from the Oppreſſion and Perſecution of her Enemies, this is God's care too; and many times nothing but an All-ſeeing, Vigilant and Omnipotent Providence can ſecure her. Many times their Deſigns are laid deep and low, full of Intriegue and Artifice, unknown to all men but themſelves, as it was in the Gunpowder Treaſon, when our King, and Nobles, and Senators, were deſigned as a rich Sacrifice to a furious and Antichriſtian Zeal; but when *the wicked plotteth againſt the juſt, and gnaſheth on him with his teeth, the Lord ſhall laugh at him, for he ſeeth that his day is coming*, 37. Pſal. 12, 13.

Let us then Pray heartily to God, that he would reconcile our Differences and Diviſions, and reſtore Peace and Unity to his Church; that he would defend us from all the Plots and Machinations of our Enemies, that we being delivered *from all Perſecutions, may evermore*

more give thanks unto him in his Holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord; To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever. *Amen.*

To

To his much Esteemed Friends the *Church-Wardens* and *Parishioners* of St. *LAWRENCE Jewry*, and St. *MARY MAGDALEN Milk-street.*

Gentlemen,

THough *I had no intention to make this Sermon Publick, yet I could not with any Modesty deny your Request, when you had paid so great a regard to the Counsel given you in it. I heartily Congratulate your happy agreement in the Choice of so excellent a Person to succeed the not-to-be-forgotten* Dr. CALAMY, *who, I doubt not, will deserve all that Honour and Kindness, which it is so natural to you to show to your Ministers. I here present you with the Sermon, as it was Preached, excepting some few things, at the beginning, which were left out in speaking, to shorten it, as much as I could, without injuring the Sense. I am sensible the Character falls very short of what our deceased Friend deserved; but it is every Word true, and I thought, had been as inof-*

inoffensive too as it is true; and so I believe it will appear to wise and considering men, and others may judge as they please. If it will contribute any thing to make both Ministers and People more faithful in the discharge of their several Duties, I have what I aimed at, both in Preaching and Printing it, especially if you please to accept of it as a Testimony of the sincere Respects of

GENTLEMEN,

Your very Humble Servant,

WILLIAM SHERLOCK.

SER-

SERMON II.

Preach'd at the Funeral of the Reverend *Benjamin Calamy*, D.D. and late Miniſter of St. *Lawrence Jewry*, *London*, Jan. 7. 168⅝.

24 Matth. 45, 46.

Who then is a Faithful and Wiſe ſervant whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Houſhold, to give them meat in due ſeaſon?

Bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.

IN this and the foregoing Chapter, our Saviour acquaints his Diſciples with the Signs and Prognoſticks of his coming; which plainly have a double aſpect, both upon his coming to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, and upon his coming to judge the World: But the application he makes of it, is of univerſal uſe; *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*, v. 42.

which is excellent advice, in what ſenſe ſoever we underſtand the coming of our Lord; for the coming of our Lord ſignifies his coming to take account of us, and whether we apply this to the Hour of our Death, or to the laſt Day of Judgment, ſtill it concerns us to watch: that is, to be always diligent and careful in doing our Duty, and diſcharging that Truſt which is committed to us, that whenever our Lord comes, we may give up our Accounts with joy.

The Words, I have now read to you, concern the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and their Succeſſors, the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church, who are as much obliged to this watchfulneſs, as any other ſort of Perſons, becauſe as they have a greater Truſt, ſo they have a greater Account to give. This we learn from 12 *Luke* 42, 43 *ver.* where our Saviour having given that general advice to all his Diſciples, to watch for the coming of their Lord, St. *Peter* particularly enquires, how far he, and the reſt of the Apoſtles were concerned in it: *Lord, ſpeakeſt thou this parable unto us, or even to all?* ver. 41. To which our Saviour anſwers, *Who then*

is

that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make Ruler of his Houshold, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh shall find so doing. Wherein our Saviour does particularly apply that general Advice to his Apostles and their Successors, his Servants, Stewards, and Ministers of the Gospel: and indeed those particular expressions which are here used do sufficiently acquaint us, to whom this Advice belongs.

We need not question, who is here meant by *the Lord*, which is the peculiar Title of Christ in the *New Testament*, and it is as evident, what this Houshold is, which is the Church of Christ, *The House and Temple of the living God*, *The Houshold of Faith*, *The Houshold of God*. And Christ is said to be Faithful *as a Son*, or Lord, *over his own House, whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoycing of the hope firm unto the end*, in distinction from *Moses*, who was Faithful as a Servant.

1 Cor. 3. 16. 2 Cor. 6 16. 6. Gal. 10. 3. Heb. 5, 6.

The Rulers of the Houshold, or the Stewards in St. *Luke*, are the Apostles, Bishops, Presbyters, who are the Go-

20. Acts 28. 1 Cor. 4. 1. vernours of the Church, ἐπίσκοποι the *Overſeers, the Miniſters of Chriſt, the Stewards of the Myſteries of God. The Meat*, which they are *to give in Seaſon*, is the Word of Life, which with reſpect to the different degrees and perfection of Knowledge is compared to 1 Cor. 3. 2. *Milk*, and to *ſtrong Meat*: and therefore they are commanded to *feed the* 5. Heb. 12. 1 Pet. 2. 2. *Flock, to preach the Word, to be inſtant* 2 Tim. 4. 2. *in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon; to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-ſuffering and doctrine.*

This is ſufficient to ſhew you, that my Text does principally concern the Biſhops and Miniſters of the Church, who are in an eminent manner the Servants of Chriſt in the Inſtruction and Government of his Church, which is his Houſe; and in ſpeaking to theſe words, I ſhall obſerve this following method.

I. Conſider the Duty of Goſpel-Biſhops and Paſtors, which is to Feed, and to Govern the Houſhold of Chriſt.

II. The Qualifications of Goſpel-Miniſters, which are Faithfulneſs and Prudence, *a Faithful and Wiſe ſervant.*

III. The

III. The great rewards of ſuch men, *Bleſſed is that ſervant.*

I. The Duty of Goſpel Miniſters, whether Biſhops or others, and that conſiſts of two parts. 1. To Feed. 2. To Govern the Houſhold or Church of Chriſt. They are appointed *Rulers of his Houſhold, to give them meat in due ſeaſon.*

1. To Feed the Flock of Chriſt. This command Chriſt gave to *Peter*, and repeated it three times; *Simon, ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me more than theſe?* then *feed my lambs, feed my ſheep.* Now to Feed, ſignifies to inſtruct men in the Knowledge of Chriſt, for Knowledge is the proper food and nouriſhment of the Soul, by which it grows in Spiritual Wiſdom, and all Vertue and Goodneſs; and is as neceſſary to our Spiritual Life, as natural food is to the Life of our Bodies. *This is life eternal*, ſaith our Saviour, *to know Thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt ſent.*

20. Acts 28.

21. John 15, 16, 17.

1 Pet 2. 2.

17. John. 3.

For this reaſon our Saviour appointed Stewards and Diſpenſers of the Myſteries of his Kingdom, whoſe whole buſineſs it ſhould be to ſtudy the Divine

Will themſelves, and to inſtruct others. For this is a knowledge which muſt be taught; Nature may inſtruct us in the Being of a God, and the differences between good and evil, and the plain Rules of Morality; but the Myſteries of the Kingdom, the whole œconomy of mans Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, is to be known only by Revelation. Chriſt came down from Heaven to reveal this to us, and he inſtructed his Apoſtles, and his Apoſtles by their Preaching and Writings inſtructed the Church, and have left us a ſtanding Rule of Faith and Manners; but yet it is neceſſary, that there ſhould be ſome Men peculiarly devoted to the Service of Religion, the ſtudy of the Scriptures, and the Work of the Miniſtry, to inſtruct and teach thoſe who have neither leiſure not opportunities for enquiry, nor capacity to learn without a Guide, which is the caſe of the generality of Chriſtians; eſpecially ſince Religion has been clogged with ſuch infinite Diſputes, and there has been ſo much art uſed to make the plaineſt truths difficult, obſcure, and uncertain, to corrupt the Chriſtian Faith, and to make it comply with mens

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ſenſual Luſts, or ſecular Intereſts. A Guide and Inſtructor is abſolutely neceſſary, when there are ſo many Turnings and Labyrinths, wherein men may loſe themſelves, and their way to Heaven.

But though there were no Diſputes in Religion, no difficulty in underſtanding it, though all men were agreed about the way to Heaven, though the meaneſt Chriſtian underſtood the Myſteries of Chriſtianity, as well as the greateſt Divine, yet there would be conſtant need of a Spiritual Guide, while men are apt to be unmindful of their Duty, and careleſs in the Practice of it. The work of an Evangelical Paſtor is not meerly to inſtruct the Ignorant, but to exhort, to reprove, to admoniſh, to watch over the Lives and Manners of Chriſtians, to make ſeaſonable Applications to their Conſciences, to adminiſter Comfort to afflicted Spirits, to excite and quicken the ſlothful, and to encourage the fearful and timerous, and to aſſiſt and direct men in their Spiritual Warfare, how to obtain a glorious victory over the World and the Fleſh. This is to feed the Flock of Chriſt, and to give them Meat in due ſeaſon, to inſtruct them in

thoſe things of which they are ignorant, and to put them in mind of thoſe things which they already know, that their Faith may be turned into a principle of life and action, and this heavenly Food may be digeſted into Blood and Spirits, to the edifying of the Body of Chriſt in all Chriſtian Graces and Vertues.

2. Another part of the Miniſterial Office conſiſts in Acts of Diſcipline and Government; Chriſt has made theſe Miniſters and Servants, *Rulers over his houſhold.* No Society can be preſerved, without Order and Government, which is as abſolutely neceſſary in the Church, as in the State. Chriſt is the *Head* of the Church, the *Husband*, the *Shepherd*, the *Lord*, which are all names of Authority and Power; and the Church is his *Body*, his *Spouſe*, his *Flock*, his *Houſhold*, and *Family*, which are names of Subjection, and denote a regular and orderly Society; but Chriſt has now left this World, and does not viſibly appear among us, to direct and govern the Affairs of his Church; he is aſcended into Heaven, where he ſits at the right hand of God, and exerciſeth an inviſible Power and Providence for the defence and preſervation

5. Eph. 23.
10. John 14.

vation of his Church on Earth: He governs us by his Laws, and by his Spirit, and by his Miniſters: for *when he aſcended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. And he gave ſome, Apoſtles, and ſome, Prophets: and ſome, Evangeliſts, and ſome, Paſtors and Teachers. For the Perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt: Till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.* 4. Eph. 8, 11, 12, 13.

When our Saviour was riſen from the dead, he tells his Diſciples, *All power is given unto me both in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World.* This is their Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel, and to govern his Church; which was not meerly a perſonal Commiſſion to the Apoſtles, but extends to all their Succeſſors, as appears from Chriſt's promiſe to be with them in the diſcharge 28. Mat. 18, 19, 20.

of

of this Miniſterial Authority to the end of the World. Thus St. *John* acquaints us, that Chriſt after his Reſurrection appeared to his Apoſtles, when they were met together, and ſaid unto them,

20. John 21, 22, 23. *Peace be unto you, as my Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you. And as he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaid unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt. Whoſe ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſe ſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained.* This inveſted them with Authority; but then the actual communication of Power, which, eſpecially at that time, was neceſſary to the diſcharge of their Office, was reſerved for the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt; and therefore our Saviour commanded them, *Not to depart from Jeruſalem, but to wait for the promiſe of the Father*, that is, the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. For ſays he, *Ye ſhall receive power after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you, and ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt parts of the Earth.*

1. Act. 4. 8, 9.

And accordingly we find, that during the time of the Apoſtles, the Supreme Authority of the Church was in their hands, which they committed to their Succeſ-

ſucceſſors, and has ever ſince been exerciſed by Chriſtian Biſhops and Presbyters, with regard to their different Order and Power. But what is this Power which Chriſt hath given to his Miniſters? They have no Rods, nor Axes, as ſecular Princes have, to compel men to the Faith of Chriſt, and to force their obedience. No, this is contrary to the Genius and Spirit of Chriſtianity. If men will be Infidels, if they will be wicked, we cannot help it: *For though we walk in the fleſh, we do not war after the fleſh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,* ſuch as earthly Princes uſe, *but mighty through God, to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.* 2 Cor. 10. 3, 4, 5.

Our Saviour in my Text acquaints us what this Power and Authority is; he *makes them Rulers over his Houſhold, to give them meat in due ſeaſon.* This is the Authority Chriſt hath given to his Miniſters, to inſtruct, to exhort, to adviſe, to admoniſh, to reprove, and that with *ſharpneſs* too, when there is

2 Cor. 13. 10. is occaſion for it, *according to the power which the Lord hath given to edification, and not to deſtruction*; as St. *Paul* ſpeaks.

But what Authority is this? May not every Chriſtian do the ſame? Is it not the duty of us all, as we are able, to inſtruct, exhort, reprove one another? Yes, it is; and I would to God it were more generally practiſed: but yet every private Chriſtian cannot do this with the Authority of a Biſhop, or a Goſpel-Miniſter: The Inſtructions and Exhortations of private Chriſtians, are acts of Friendſhip and Charity; and the obligation to it, is that mutual concernment and ſympathy which the Members of the ſame Body ought to have for each other: in Goſpel-Miniſters it is an act of Authority, like the Cenſures of a Father, a Magiſtrate, or a Judge.

2 Cor. 1. 24. We do not pretend indeed, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, to *have dominion over your Faith*, to exerciſe a kind of Sovereign Authority, to oblige you to belive any thing meerly becauſe we ſay it; but yet our Authority is ſuch, that if in the exerciſe of our Office we explain the Articles of Faith and Rules of Life to you, it lays an indiſpeſanble Obli-

Obligation upon you, carefully to examine what we ſay, and not to reject it, without plain and manifeſt evidence, that what we teach you is not agreeable to the Will of God revealed in the Scriptures. For when we come in the Name and Authority of Chriſt, that man who rejects our Meſſage, without being ſure that we exceed our Commiſſion, rejects the Authority by which we act; and *he that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, but God.* It is our Work and our Commiſſion to inſtruct you, and it is your Duty to be inſtructed; and whoever ſhall wantonly reject any Doctrines which do not ſuit with his humour and intereſt, or oppoſe ſome popular miſtakes and prejudices againſt the Inſtructions of his Guide, or turn away his ear from inſtruction, and heap to himſelf Teachers, having itching ears, ſuch a man muſt give a ſevere account of this neglect and contempt to the great Biſhop and Shepherd of Souls. While we are careful to diſcharge our Office in purſuance of that Truſt our Great Maſter hath committed to us, what our Saviour tells his Apoſtles is true of the meaneſt of us all; *He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth* 10. Luke 16.

deſpiſeth me: and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.

The like may be ſaid of the Exhortations, and Counſels, and Directions, and Reproofs, of our Spiritual Guides, they carry great Authority with them; they are not like the private Admonitions of our Friends, who exhort and reprove out of kindneſs, and their particular concernment for us: To reject ſuch Counſels as theſe, does mightily aggravate our ſin and our condemnation, as every thing does, which makes our ſin more wilful and obſtinate; but to reject the Counſels and Reproofs of our Guide, is a new act of diſobedience to that Authority which Chriſt has ſet in his Church. Whether you will hear, or whether you will obey, we muſt exhort, reprove, adviſe; and wo be to us, if we do not, and wo be to thoſe who will not hear, who will not obey. Our great Maſter looks upon this as a contempt of his own Authority, and this is all the Authority we have. We cannot force you to obey our Counſels or Reproofs, but ours and your Maſter will ſeverely puniſh you, if you do not.

In a word, the Inſtructions, Reproofs, and

and Cenſures of Chriſt's Miniſters, carry ſuch Authority with them, that they can receive into, or ſhut out of the Communion of the Church, which is the only viſible ſtate of Salvation. Remiſſion of ſins, and eternal Life, is ordinarily to be had only in the viſible Communion of the Church, and therefore the Power of Receiving into the Church by Baptiſm, and of Caſting out of the Church by Excommunication, which is the only Authority Chriſt hath given to theſe Rulers of his Houſhold, to receive in and caſt out of his Family, is called a Power of Remitting or Retaining ſins, becauſe the forgiveneſs of Sins is to be had only in the Communion of the Church, and no man belongs to the inviſible Church, who does not live in Communion with the viſible Church, when it may be had.

The Authority of Chriſt's Miniſters is to feed thoſe who are of his Houſhold, to give them their meat in due ſeaſon, and to judge who ſhall belong to this Houſhold, who ſhall be received in, or caſt out of Chriſt's Family: This is the higheſt Act of Church-Authority on Earth, and the only Sanction

ction of all our inſtructions, counſels, and reproofs; and therefore this Authority is not intruſted with every Goſpel-Miniſter, but is committed to the chief Governours of the Church, the Biſhops, who ſucceed into the ordinary Apoſtolical Power.

II. Let us now conſider the due Qualifications which are required in Goſpel-Miniſters, and they are two: Faithfulneſs and Prudence, *Who is that Faithful and Wiſe ſervant?*

Firſt, Faithfulneſs: Now Faithfulneſs in a Servant conſiſts in being true to his Truſt; and when this is applied to Preaching the Goſpel, it ſignifies, that he is extremely careful to publiſh the whole Mind and Will of God; which as it concerns us in this Age, includes theſe following Rules:

1. To be careful to acquaint our ſelves with the Will of God, that we may be *Scribes which are inſtructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, who are like unto a man that is an houſholder, which bringeth forth out of his treaſure things new and old.* The Prieſts lips muſt preſerve Knowledge, but we muſt firſt have it, before we can teach it others; and ſince none of us now pretend to immedi-

13. Mat. 52.

mediate Inſpirations, this is a work of difficulty and labour, and requires as much faithfulneſs in our Studies, as in the Pulpit. It is no argument of Faithfulneſs, whatever it may be of Diligence, to run like *Ahimaaz* without Tidings, to vent ſome crude and indigeſted thoughts for the Oracles of God. 2 Sam. 18. 22.

2. Faithfulneſs requires us to preach nothing for the Will of God, but what we are ſure, to be ſo; to deliver no Meſſage, but what we have received in Commiſſion; not to indulge our own private conjectures and fancies, nor think to mend and ſublimate Religion by Philoſophical Speculations, but to content our ſelves with the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, to Preach Chriſt Jeſus, and him crucified. Nothing has done greater miſchief to Religion, than when the very Teachers of it have been ambitious to be Wiſe above what is written. All the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, as diſtinguiſht from the Principles of Natural Religion, can be known only by Revelation; and therefore there is no reaſoning about them any farther, than to know what is revealed, and what is not revealed; for whate-

ver is more than this, is so uncertain, and so useless, that it is not worth the knowing. Since we preach in the Name, and by the Authority of Christ, we ought not to instruct our People in any thing but what we have his Authority for; for this is to exceed our Commission. Other nice Speculations may entertain us in private Conversation; but when we preach in the Name of Christ, let us onely preach his Gospel, and teach them to observe and do whatsoever he hath commanded us.

3. Faithfulness requires, that we preach the whole Will of God; that we instruct men in all the Articles of the Christian Faith, especially where there is any apparent and present danger of a mistake; and that we teach them every part of their Duty to God and men, especially such Duties as they are most unwilling to learn, and most averse to practice. This is an essential part of Faithfulness, and requires no small courage too.

There are no times so bad, no hearers so captious, but they will very well bear some general commendations of Religion, or some common Topicks about Virtue or Vice; which are of

great uſe too, eſpecially in ſuch a ſcep-tical and unbelieving Age as this. But a faithful diſcharge of our Miniſtry re-quires ſomewhat more; a particular application to the Conſciences of men, according to their wants and neceſſities, not ſo much to conſult what will pleaſe them, as what will do them good. It mightily concerns a Goſpel-Miniſter, as far as he can, to maintain a fair repu-tation in the world; but a good name is nothing worth, when we can do no good by it, when we cannot get or maintain a good name without neglect-ing our Duty, or betraying the Souls of men. I had a thouſand times rather, that men ſhould reproach and revile me for inſtructing them in ſuch Duties, as they cannot with patience hear of, than that they ſhould commend me for my ſilence.

It is hard to live in any Age, wherein there are not ſome popular Errors, or ſome popular Vices to be corrected; and it is a very dangerous thing to meddle with any thing that is popular. But what is danger to that man, who is in a greater danger by the neglect of his Duty? Shall any man call himſelf a Miniſter of the Goſpel, and a Servant

of Jeſus Chriſt, and in ſuch an Age, as we now live in, be aſhamed or afraid to cenſure or confute the Errors of Popery or Fanaticiſm, or to reprove Schiſm and Faction, becauſe they are very popular Vices? *Let a man ſo account of us, as the miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God. Moreover, it is required in ſtewards that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of man's judgment:* as St. *Paul* ſpeaks. When we leave our ſeveral Flocks, it will be infinite ſatisfaction to us, to be able to ſay, as St. *Paul* did to the *Aſian* Biſhops; *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not ſhunned to declare to you all the counſel of God.*

1 Cor. 4. 1, 2, 3.

20. Acts 26, 27.

Secondly, Prudence is as neceſſary in a Goſpel-Miniſter, as Faithfulneſs is: By Prudence I do not mean Cunning and Subtilty, artificial Inſinuations and Addreſſes, which are more like the Arts of Seducers, than of Goſpel-Miniſters, *Who by good words, and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple.* Prudence will not allow us in the neglect of any part of our Duty, whate-

16. Rom. 18.

er the event be; but *we muſt renounce* 2 Cor. 4.
he hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walk- 2.
ng in craftineſs, nor handling the word of
God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of
he truth, commending our ſelves to eve-
y mans conſcience in the ſight of God.

Wiſdom and Prudence, as it is conſiſtent with Faithfulneſs and Honeſty in the diſcharge of our Truſt, can ſignify no more but this; To inſtruct, Exhort, Perſwade, and perform all the parts and offices of a Goſpel-Miniſter, in ſuch a manner as may render our inſtructions and perſwaſions moſt effectual; to take the moſt convenient ſeaſons, when men are moſt apt to be wrought on; to teach them ſuch things as are of moſt preſent uſe to them; to uſe ſuch Arguments as are moſt likely to prevail; to avoid all unneceſſary provocations, when the Duty it ſelf, which we are to teach them is not the matter of the provocation; for if men will be provoked with hearing of their Duty, there is no help for that. Prudence never diſpences with any part of our Duty, but directs to the beſt way of doing it: a Faithful Servant does what he is commanded, and a Wiſe Servant

does it in the moſt effectual manner.

III. The laſt part of my Text concerns the great Rewards of ſuch Faithful and Wiſe Servants; *Bleſſed is that ſervant.* What this Reward is, we are not here particularly told. All good men, we know, ſhall be very bleſſed and happy in the other World, and we may reaſonably preſume, that Chriſt, who is the great Judge of the World, has reſerved ſome peculiar marks of honour for his immediate Servants: This he plainly intimates to us, in that diſtinction he makes between the reward of a Prophet, and of a righteous man: *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, ſhall receive a prophets reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, ſhall receive a righteous mans reward.*

10. Mat. 41.

Our reward in Heaven will bear ſome proportion to the nature of our Work, and to that ſervice we do for God in this World. Now we cannot do any more acceptable ſervice, than to ſerve God in the Goſpel of his Son; to uſe our utmoſt endeavours to propagate Religion in the World, and to make other men wiſe,

and

nd good, and happy. Our Saviour imſelf came into the World on this very deſign, and was advanc'd to the ght Hand of Glory and Power, as a eward of it; and thoſe who *are workers together with him*, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, ill receive ſome proportionable reward lſo. 2 Cor. 6. 1.

The faithful diſcharge of this Duty is a work of infinite care and difficulty, that it made an Apoſtle himſelf cry ut, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things!* 2 Cor. 2. 16. requires the exerciſe of great care, nd great prudence, and great patience; it is abundantly enough to employ our whole time and thoughts either in ſtudying the Will of God, or n attending the publick Miniſtries of Religion, or in private Addreſſes and Applications to men who want our Advice and Counſel; we muſt contentedly bear all the Affronts and Inſolencies of bad men, the Frowardneſs and Peeviſhneſs of many profeſs'd Chriſtians, the Gainſayings and Contradictions of ſinners. We muſt go on and perſevere in our Work, though our Perſons and our Miniſtry be deſpiſed: *when we are reviled, we muſt bleſs: when perſecuted, we muſt ſuffer: when defamed, we muſt entreat:* 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13.

yea though we *are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things.* This is not very pleasing to flesh and blood, but the harder the work is, the greater will our reward be, if we be found faithful and wise Servants.

Nay, there is no Work does so ennoble the Mind as this, and qualifie us for an excellent Reward. No man can faithfully discharge this Work, but it must purge and refine his Mind, and set him vastly above this World, and the little Concernments of it: It gives us a more clear distinct comprehensive knowledge of God and divine things, which is an Angelical perfection of the Mind and Understanding; and he must be a strange man, who can be so constantly employed in the Contemplation of God, and the things which relate to another and a better life, and not find his Soul ravish'd with those unseen and unspeakable Glories; who is so constantly employed in taking care of other mens Souls, and takes no care of his own; who is so frequent in his Devotions, as the very nature of our Work exacts from us, and not live a most divine and heavenly life: There are indeed some, who in the most Divine Employment

are

re no great Examples of ſuch a divine Converſation; but I fear they will not be found in the number of theſe faithful and wiſe ſervants. Whoever heartily applies himſelf to the care of Souls, will in the firſt place take care of his own; and the faithful diſcharge of this Duty, will raiſe us ſo much above the ordinary Level and Attainments of Chriſtians, as will prepare us for a greater Reward, and advance us to a more perfect ſtate of Glory.

Nay, that immediate Relation we ſtand in to Chriſt, who is the Soveraign Lord and Judge of the World, if we approve our ſelves faithful and wiſe Servants, will ſecure us of a more excellent Reward. The Church on Earth and the Church in Heaven, is but one Church, one Houſhold and Family; and thoſe whom he has made Rulers of his Houſhold here, to whom he has committed the greateſt places of Truſt and Dignity, need not fear being degraded in the other World, if they adorn their Office, and faithfully diſcharge their Truſt here: and therefore our Saviour tells his Apoſtles, *Verily I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son* 19. Mat. 28.

of

of man ſhall ſit in the Throne of his glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael: that is, that their Reward and Glory in the other World, ſhould anſwer to that place of Truſt, and Power, and Dignity, which they had in the Church on Earth; and this Promiſe is no more peculiar to the Apoſtles, than their Office was.

In a word, If we conſider what the ſtate of the other World is, and who is King there, that it is the bleſſed Jeſus, our Great High Prieſt, King of *Salem*, or the new *Jeruſalem*, and Prieſt of the moſt High God, how mean and contemptible ſoever our Office is thought here, we need not doubt but the Scene will be mightily chang'd, when we come into that Kingdom where the King is a High Prieſt.

Let this then, beloved Brethren of the Clergy, be a mighty Encouragement to us to be very diligent and faithful in the diſcharge of this great Truſt; whatever Difficulties we meet with, whatever Scorns, Reproaches, or Sufferings, it is but expecting a while, and our Lord will come, and his Reward is with him: and *bleſſed*, for ever bleſſed,

d, is that Servant, whom his Lord when e cometh ſhall find ſo doing.

Yea bleſſed, for ever bleſſed, as my Text gives us reaſon to hope, is this our dear Brother, whoſe Remains lie here before us, who when his Lord came, was found thus doing. We may lament the loſs of ſo kind a Relation, ſo true a Friend, ſo faithful a Paſtor, and Fellow-labourer, according to the ſeveral intereſts we had in him; but he, bleſſed Soul, has fought a good Fight, and finiſhed his courſe, and kept the Faith, and is now gone to receive a Crown of Righteouſneſs, a Crown of Immortality and Glory. He is now gone to that great Biſhop and Shepherd of Souls, whoſe Flock he has ſo carefully and diligently fed, and whoſe wandring and ſtragling Sheep he has reduced into the Fold; To that kind Shepherd who laid down his life for his Sheep, and therefore will not fail to reward thoſe who have ſpent their lives, and were ready to have ſacrificed them too, for the ſervice of Souls.

When we ſpeak of ſo great a Man, it is below his Character to mention ſuch things as would be thought conſiderable Attainments in meaner perſons; though

though indeed a truly great Man does nothing meanly. A great Mind gives a peculiar grace and decency to common Actions, as it was easy to observe in his very mirth and freest Humours, that he never gave the Reins out of his hands, but governed himself by the strictest Rules of Prudence and Religion.

But I shall confine my self to the subject of my Text, and consider him only as *a faithful and wise Steward*, and therefore have very little to add; for I doubt not, but you who knew him, especially you who have enjoyed the benefit of his Ministry, and have lived under his Care and Conduct, have already applied what I have discoursed on this Argument, to your deceased Pastor; and would I have Chosen any particular man to have drawn the Character by, of a wise and faithful Steward, there are not many men I should sooner have thought on, than Dr. *Calamy* to have been the Pattern.

That he did take care to give you Meat in due season, I need not tell you, because you all know it. If Preaching in season and out of season, if publick Instructions and private Applications, where

here they were needful or desired, be feed the Flock of Christ, and to give eat to his Household and Family, this did, and that very faithfully and isely too.

In the first place, he took care o inform himself, and to furnish is own Mind with all useful know-edge; and his constant Preaching, hough without any vain affectation of earning, which serves onely to amuse, ot to instruct, did sufficiently discover oth his natural and acquired Abilities. He had a clear and distinct apprehensi-n of things, an easy and manly Rheto-ick, strong Sense conveyed to the mind in familiar words, good Reasons inspired with a decent Passion, which did not onely teach but move and trans-port the Hearers, and at the same time gave both light and heat: for indeed he was a good man, which is necessary to make a good Preacher; he had an in-ward vital sense of Religion, and that animated his discourses with the same Divine Passions which he felt in himself.

He did not entertain his Hearers with School Subtilties, or a conjectural Divinity, with such thin and airy Spe-culations, as can neither be seen, nor felt

felt, nor understood; but his chief care was to explain the great Articles of Faith, and Rules of Life, what we must believe, and how we must live, that we may be eternally happy. And he did, as a faithful Servant ought to do, as he declared a little before his death, that he never preached any thing, but what he himself firmly believed to be true.

I need not tell you what a troublesome World we have lived in for some years past, such Critical times as would try the Principles and Spirits of men; when a prevaling Faction threatned both Church and State, and the fears of Popery were thought a sufficient Justification of the most illegal and irreligious methods to keep it out; when it was scandalous to speak a word either for the King or the Church; when cunning men were silent, and those who affected Popularity swam with the Stream; then this great and good man durst reprove Schism and Faction, durst teach men to conform to the Church, and to obey and honour the King; durst vindicate the despised Church of *England*, and the hated Doctrine of Passive Obedience, though the one was thought

ought to favour Popery, and the ther to introduce Slavery; but he was bove the powerful Charms of Names, nd liked Truth never the worſe, beauſe it was miſ-called. His publick ermons preached in thoſe days, and rinted by publick Authority, are aſting Proofs of this, and yet he was no apiſt neither, but durſt reprove the rrors of Popery, when ſome others, who made the greateſt noiſe and outry about it, grew wiſe and cautious. his was like a truly honeſt and faithul Servant, to oppoſe the growing Diſtempers of the Age, without any regard ither to unjuſt Cenſures, or apparent Danger. And yet he did not needleſly provoke any man; he gave no hard words, but thought it ſevere enough to confute mens errors without upbraiding or reproaching their perſons. His Converſation was courteous and affable to all men, ſoft and eaſy, as his Principles were ſtubborn; he could yeild any thing but the Truth, and bear with any thing but the Vices of men. He would indeed have been the wonder of his Age had he not lived in ſuch an Age, as, thanks be to God, can ſhew many ſuch wonders, and yet in ſuch an Age

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as this he made an Illuſtrious Figure; though he had his Equals, he had not many Superiors.

Thus he lived, and thus this good man died, for thus he was found doing when his Lord came. The firſt ſymptoms of his Diſtemper ſeized him juſt before his laſt Sermon at *White-hall*, but gave him ſo much reſpite as to take his leave of the World in an excellent Diſcourſe of Immortality, which he ſpeaks of with ſuch a ſenſible guſt and reliſh, as if his Soul had been then upon the wing, and had ſome fore-taſte of thoſe joys it was juſt a going to poſſeſs. And indeed he encountered the apprehenſions of Death, like one who believed and hoped for Immortality; he was neither over-fond of living, nor afraid to die. He received the Supper of our Lord, profeſſed his Communion with the Church of *England*, in which he had lived, and in which he now died; and having recommended his Soul to God, he quietly expected how he would diſpoſe of him.

But I muſt not forget to tell you, that he died like a true and faithful Paſtor, with a tender care and affection for his Flock. When he impoſed this unwel-

come

me Office upon me, he told me, he d not desire any praises of himself, but t I would give some good advice to s people, who, said he, are indeed very kind and loving people. And is was not the first nor the onely time have heard him own not onely your nd reception of him at first, but the peated and renewed expressions of ur affection, which did signally mani- t it self in his late Sickness, and now companies him to the Grave. A Cha- cter, which to your honour I speak you have now made good for seve- l successions, and which, I hope, you ll never forfeit.

But what that good counsel is, he ould have me give you, he told me t; and therefore I can onely guess his intentions in this. Were he now esent to speak to you, I believe he ould not give you better counsel than has already done: and therefore my vice to you is,

1. To remember those Counsels and hortations which you have heard m your deceased Pastor. Though the wer be removed, yet let that immor- l Seed, that Word of Life which he as sown, live and fructifie in your

hearts, and bring forth the blessed Fruits of Righteousness. He has shewed you the plain way to Heaven, have a care you do not forget it, have a care you do not wander out of it. He has recommended the Communion of the Church of *England* to you. He has taught you to be Loyal to your Prince, and to be true to your Religion; take care then, that neither your Religion destroy your Loyalty, nor your Loyalty corrupt your Religion: remember that beloved person, whose Memory is dear and sacred to you, was neither a Rebel, Papist, nor a Fanatick.

2. Since you have lost your Guide, a faithful and a prudent Guide, and the choice of a Successour is in your selves, be very careful, as the concernment of your Souls requires you should be, of your Choice. Consider what an Age we live in, which requires an experienced and skilful Pilot to steer a secure and steady course. Have a care of dividing into Factions and Parties; let not meer private Interests or Friendships govern you; if it be possible, admit of no Competitions, much less of Pulpit-Combats, which do oftner occasion lasting and fatal Divisions, than end in

a wise

wiſe Choice. Remember what a ſuc-ſſion you have had of Great and Good en in this Place, and let it be your nbition ſtill to equal and out-do it if u can.

And now I ſhall conclude with one ord to you my brethren of the Clergy. e have loſt a faithful and diligent La-ourer in God's Vineyard, in a time hen we could ill have ſpared him; et us then, who ſtill ſurvive, double ur diligence, and expreſs a greater eal and Concernment in the defence Religion, and in the care of Souls. Let us remember that we are all mortal, nd how little time we have to work in, we know not; but let us ſo im-prove the remainder of our days, that hen our Lord comes, he may own us r faithful and wiſe Servants, and beſtow on us a Crown of Righteouſneſs nd Immortality. Which God of his finite mercy grant, through our Lord eſus Chriſt; To whom, with the Father nd the Holy Spirit, be honour, and lory, and power, now and for ever. *men*

SERMON III.

Preach'd at *Whitehall*, before the Queen, on the 17th of *June*, 1691. Being the Faſt-Day.

LXXVII. PSALM 10, 11, 12.

And I ſaid, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the moſt High.

I will remember the works of the Lord: ſurely I will remember thy wonders of old.

I will meditate alſo of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.

THE Pſalmiſt, at the penning of this Pſalm, was oppreſſed with very black and deſponding Thoughts: The ſtate of the Church ſeems to have been very calamitous, they had been ſo long and ſo grievouſly afflicted, that he began to queſtion, whether God would ever be merciful to them again: *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? and will*

he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?

But in my Text he recollects himself, confesses his Wickedness and Sin in giving the least entertainment to such unworthy Thoughts of God, as if he could forget his promise and Covenant, which he had made to their Fathers *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, *This is my infirmity*; want of Faith and Trust in God's Promises; and to cure this Diffidence, to revive his dying Hopes, and to confirm his Faith in God, he calls to mind those glorious Deliverances which God had wrought for his Church, and his People *Israel* in former Ages: *I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High*; those days when God did so visibly deliver *Israel* with his own right hand; as it follows 14, 15 Verses, *Thou art the God that doest wonders; thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.* And instances in those miraculous Deliverances in *Ægypt*, the Red Sea, and the Wilderness, as a

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reaſon and foundation of a firm Faith and Truſt in God in all Ages; theſe are thoſe Works of the Lord, and Wonders of Old, which he will remember, which he will meditate, and talk of, with which he will ſupport his Spirit, whatever Dangers ſeem to threaten the final Ruin and Deſolation of the Church; which is the Argument of the 80. *Pſalm* 14, 15. *Return, we beſeech thee, O God of hoſts: look down from heaven, and behold and viſit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madeſt ſo ſtrong for thy ſelf.*

That God had made a Covenant with *Abraham*, and choſe his Seed and Poſterity for his peculiar People; that he had delivered them out of *Ægypt* by a mighty hand, and an outſtretched arm; that he had given them Paſſage through the Red Sea, and fed them in the Wilderneſs forty Years; that he had fought their Battles for them, and given them poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*, as he had promiſed to their Fathers; that he had in all ſucceeding Ages protected them by a viſible Providence, raiſed up Judges and Saviours to deliver them out of the hands of their

Enemies, when they cried to him; this was a sure foundation of their Faith and Hope, that God would not utterly cast off his People, but though for their sins he might deliver them into the hands of their Enemies, yet when they repented of their Evil Ways, and returned unto God, God also would return, and be merciful unto them.

And this is the wisest course we can take, whatever Troubles we suffer, whatever we fear, whatever our Sins have deserved, whatever our Enemies threaten, *To remember the works of the Lord, and his wonders of old, to meditate of all his works, and to talk of his doings.*

And this is what I at present intend, to make such Remarks on the Providence of God towards the *Jewish* Church, not omitting the experience the Christian Church has had of the same kind and watchful Providence, as may be of present use to us, both to direct us what we must do, and to give us a firm Hope and Trust in God's Mercy; for God is always the same under all the Dispensations of his Grace and Providence; and as the

Jewish

Jewiſh Church was a Type of the Chriſtian; ſo God's Providence towards them, aſſures us, what we may expect in like Circumſtances, or elſe the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament would be of very little uſe to us now; whereas St. *Paul* tells us, *That theſe things happened to them for enſamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come*, 1 Cor. 10. 11. But what difference there is between their State and ours, and how far we are concerned in the Examples, I ſhall diſtinctly obſerve under the ſeveral Particulars, as there is occaſion for it:

I. Firſt then I obſerve as St. *Paul* did, *That the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*, 11. Rom. 29. God having made a Covenant with *Abraham*, and choſen his Seed for his peculiar People, whatever their Provocations were, he would never wholly caſt them off; he many times very ſeverely puniſhed them, delivered them into the hands of their Enemies, who oppreſſed them, the *Aramites*, and *Moabites*, and *Ægyptians*, and *Aſſyrians*, and at laſt into the hands of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who

who destroyed their City and Temple, and carried them captive into *Babylon*, where they continued seventy Years, and then they returned into their own Country, and rebuilt their Temple and City, and so continued till in punishment of their great Sin in crucifying their *Messias*, and for their obstinate Infidelity, they were finally destroyed by the *Romans*, and dispersed into all Nations, and have never been a Nation since; that is, till Christ came, who was the promised Seed, in whom all the Nations of the World are blessed, as St. *Paul* proves, 3. *Gal.* 16. *To Abraham and his seed were the promises made: He saith not, Unto seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.* I say, till Christ, who was the promised Seed, and typified by *Isaac*, came, the carnal Posterity of *Abraham*, descending from *Isaac* and *Jacob*, were the Typical *Israel*, and God's peculiar People, and visible Church on Earth, and all this while God never wholly cast them off; but when Christ came, then the Promise was established to the spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, those who are the Children of *Abraham* by Faith in Christ, as

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he Apoſtle proves in the ſame place, , 7, 8, 9. and in ſeveral other places: And this is the Anſwer, which the Apoſtle gives to that terrible Objection againſt Chriſt's being the *Meſſias*, and God's owning the Chriſtian Church for his peculiar and elect People, as formerly he did the *Jews*; that then God's Promiſe to *Abraham* and his Seed fails: His Anſwer is, That the Promiſe to *Abraham* and his Seed, was meant of Chriſt, and his ſpiritual Seed, thoſe who are the Children of *Abraham* by Faith in Chriſt; as he proves at large in the 9, 10, 11 Chapters to the *Romans*; though he gives another anſwer to this too, That though the Promiſes do no longer belong to *Abraham*'s carnal Seed, yet God ſo far remembers his Covenant with *Abraham* and his carnal Seed, that he has not wholly caſt them off, but will in time engraft them into his Church again by Faith in Chriſt: *For out of Sion ſhall come the deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob.* But I cannot enlarge on this now.

To apply this then to the times of the Goſpel: We certainly learn from God's Care of the *Jewiſh* Church, that God

God will always preſerve and protect the Chriſtian Church, that the true Faith of Chriſt, and his true and ſincere Worſhippers ſhall never wholly fail in the World, as Chriſt promiſes, That *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail* againſt his Church: for God eſtabliſhed an everlaſting Covenant with *Abraham* and his Seed, that is, with Chriſt, and the Chriſtian Church, who are the true ſpiritual Seed of *Abraham*, to whom the Promiſes belong; and if God ſo punctually performed his Promiſe to the carnal Seed of *Abraham*, while they were to be his viſible Church, that is, until Chriſt came, who was the promiſed Seed, we learn by that Example, how he will protect, defend, and ſupport the Chriſtian Church to the end of the World; till Chriſt the promiſed Seed return again to Judge the World, to put an end to all Things, and to receive his Church into the Kingdom of his Father.

To this we owe the Continuance and Preſervation of the Chriſtian Church to this Day, amidſt all the Dangers which have threatned its final Ruin: when the Church is toſſed on the foaming Billows of this World, like the

e Ship into which Chriſt and his iſciples entred: 8. *Matth.* 23, 24, 25. hen *there aroſe a great tempeſt in the a, inſomuch that the ſhip was covered ith the waves; and Chriſt was aſleep, nd his diſciples came to him, and awoke im, ſaying, Lord, ſave us; we periſh. And he ſaith unto them, Why are ye ſo earful, O ye of little faith? then he roſe and rebuked the wind and the ſea, nd there was a great calm.* This was a igure and Emblem of the condition he Church is very often in in this World: for moſt of our Saviour's Miracles had ſome ſpiritual ſignifications in them: His curing the Halt, and Blind, and Lame, and Deaf, repreſented his Diviner Power in curing the Diſeaſes and Diſtempers of our Souls, in making the Blind to ſee, and the Deaf to hear, and the Lame to walk; and therefore when he cured the Man that was born blind, he turned his Diſcourſe to ſpiritual Blindneſs, 9. *Joh.* 39, 40, 41. When he had fed that great Multitude with a few Loaves and ſmall Fiſhes, he diſcourſes to them of that Bread that comes down from Heaven, and will nouriſh them unto Eternal Life, and which he only could

give

give them; 6. *John*, When he discoursed with *Martha* about raising her Brother *Lazarus* from the Dead, he preaches to her his Divine Power to raise dead Souls as well as dead Bodies, into immortal Life, 11. *John* 25, 26. When the Disciples at Christ's command had cast their Net into the Sea, [after having toiled all night and taken nothing] and encompassed a great multitude of Fishes, he tells them the meaning of it, that he would make them Fishers of Men. Thus here Christ's rebuking the Wind and Sea, which were ready to swallow up the Ship wherein he and his Disciples were, is a Figure of the State of the Church in this World, and of his readiness to Protect it: How threatning soever the Dangers are, Christ is in the Ship, and all the Powers of the World, how much soever they rage and foam, can never swallow up that Ship, wherein Christ is, unless they can swallow Him up too: and though he may seem to be asleep, and to take no notice of the Sufferings and Dangers of his Church, yet the importunate Prayers and Cries of his Disciples will awake him, and then he will arise to their defence, and hush the Winds

Winds and Seas into a Calm.

This the Church had frequent experience of under the Pagan Perſecutions, which raged with Fire and Sword, and all the witty Arts of Cruelty; when nothing would ſerve but the final Extirpation of the Name of Chriſtians: But how often did Chriſt rebuke the Wind and Sea, and reſtore profound Peace and Reſt to his Church? What a glorious Triumph did he give his Church over the laſt and moſt terrible Efforts of the Pagan Powers, when he raiſed *Conſtantine* into the Throne, and made the Empire Chriſtian?

And this is a very comfortable Conſideration to us at this time: The Proteſtant Churches, which profeſs the Pure and Uncorrupt Faith and Worſhip of Chriſt, as to all the eſſentials of Faith and Worſhip, have now for many Years groaned under the Antichriſtian Tyranny and Perſecutions, and now at laſt, and I hope it may be the laſt as it is the moſt terrible Inſult of the Antichriſtian Powers, a Great and mighty Prince bends his whole Force to root out the Proteſtant Name, as well as to Uſurp upon the Liberties

of

of *Europe*: What he has done in his own Country, and where-ever his Power and Influence reached, I need not tell you: From some of his Subjects he has forced away their Faith; others to keep their Faith have lost their Estates, their Liberty, their Country, their Lives.

What danger we were in at Home, we all saw and felt not long since, though some Men would now perswade us, it was but a Dream; but it was a very terrible Dream, if it was one, and thanks be to God that we are awakened out of it, and may we never fall into such frightful Slumbers more; or rather let us neither be lulled asleep, nor dream awake, lest these frightful Dreams prove Realities at last.

For should that mighty Monarch prevail, and like an irresistible Torrent bear all before him; as some kind Friends to the Liberties of *Europe*, and the Protestant Name and Interest, wish and pray he may; it requires not a Spirit of Prophecy, to foretel what will become of Protestants: But our Hope and Trust is in God, that the true Christian Faith shall never be rooted out; and I am as certainly perswaded

waded, that the Proteſtant Faith and Worſhip, as to the Eſſentials of it, and s oppoſed to Popery, is the true Chriſtian Faith and Worſhip, as I am f the truth and certainty of Chriſtiaity it ſelf : and when I remember y what little beginnings, and weak nd contemptible means, GOD ſpread he true light of the Goſpel over great art of the *European* World, when it as covered with the *Ægyptian* Darkeſs, and oppreſſed by the Unſupporable Tyranny of Popery ; notwithanding all the Follies, Diviſions and Miſcarriages of Proteſtants, I cannot ear, that God will cauſe our Sun to t again, and that he will finally reove his Goſpel from us ; and that ives great reaſon to hope that he will heck the Pride and Ambition, and t a ſtop to the Succeſſes of a Prince, ho glories in the Extirpation of his roteſtant Subjects, and at once enaves both the Bodies and the Souls of len ; who challenges as abſolute a Doinion over the Faith, as over the ſtates of his Vaſſals, to fill his Exchequer and Purgatory together. his I am ſure, we ought heartily to g of God in our moſt ſolemn Prayers

and Fasts; and those who scruple this, if they understand themselves, must never say the Lord's Prayer more, wherein our Saviour has taught us to pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, which those who wish success to Persecuting and Antichristian Powers, do not, and cannot pray,

II. I observe farther, That as God's Covenant with *Abraham* and his Posterity, was sure and stedfast, that no provocations could ever tempt him utterly to destroy them, so he never inflicted any publick Judgments and Calamities on them, but when he was greatly provoked by their Sins. This was God's express Covenant with them, 26. *Levit.* That *if they walked in his statutes, and kept his commandments*, then he would bestow all Temporal Blessings on them, Rain in its season, and the encrease of their Land, in Corn, and Wine, and Oyl; Peace at home, and Victory abroad, and his special Presence and Favour: *I will set my tabernacle amongst you; and my soul shall not abhor you, and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people.* But if they would not hearken unto him, and would

would not do all his Commandments, then he threatens all ſorts of Evils ſhould befal them, ſickneſs of Body, to fly before their Enemies, the unfruitfulneſs and barrenneſs of their Land, that they ſhall be a prey to wild Beaſts, that the Sword ſhall devour them, and they ſhall be enſlaved to their Enemies, and buy their own Bread of them; that they ſhould ſuffer Famine to ſuch extremity, as to eat their own Sons and Daughters; that he would lay waſte their Cities, and make their Country deſolate; and carry them away captive into foreign Countries, as you may ſee at large in that Chapter: This was his Covenant with them; and this he punctually obſerved: whenever they did obey him, they were a happy and proſperous People, their Enemies crouched before them, they enjoyed Plenty and Peace, enlarged their Borders, and made their Neighbours Subjects and Tributaries to them; and though God did not always puniſh them according to their deſerts, yet he never did inflict any publick or National Judgments on them, but when they were grown very corrupt and wicked in their manners; as

it were easie to shew from the History of those Times, and all the remarkable Judgments God inflicted on them.

Now, I must confess, when we apply th is to the Christian Church, the case is very different, for God has not so expresly covenanted with the Christian Church for external Peace and Prosperity, as he did with the *Jews*; they were the carnal Seed and Posterity of *Abraham*, Heirs of an earthly *Canaan* and external Prosperity; but the spiritual Seed of *Abraham* are Heirs of spiritual and eternal Blessings, which were typified by the carnal Promises made to the *Jewish* Church: the Christian Church was founded in the Sufferings of our Lord; the Christian Faith was at first propagated by the courage, patience, and sufferings of the Apostles, and the Primitive Martyrs and Confessors: The Terms our Saviour proposes to us are, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me: He that loveth his life, shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.* And therefore the most sincere Believers, and most exemplary Christians may suffer very severely in this World

and

nd their ſupport and comfort is, that hey ſhall be proportionably rewarded n the next: this was the great Objection the *Jews* made againſt Chriſtians being the Sons and peculiar People of God, that they were hated and perſecuted for the Faith of Chriſt, and God ſuffered them to be ſo; whereas he had promiſed all Temporal Proſperity to he obſervance of his Laws and Statutes; and if believing in Chriſt had been the Will and Commandment of God, he would certainly have made good all the Promiſes of their Law to the Diſciples of Jeſus: An Objection which very much troubled many believing *Jews* themſelves, who did not thoroughly underſtand the difference between the *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian Diſpenſation, between the Law of *Moſes*, and the Goſpel of Chriſt, and therefore is particularly anſwered by St. *Paul*, 8. *Rom.* and in the 7. *Heb.*

But this ſhews, that the Faith and Worſhip of Chriſt is not always rewarded with external Proſperity, and we muſt not expect it ſhould be; and conſequently that very ſevere Sufferings and Perſecutions may befal Chriſtians, not always for the correction

and punishment of their Sins, but for the trial of their Faith and Patience, to make them conformed to their Suffering Head, to prepare them for richer and brighter Crowns, to convince and convert their Persecutors, and to propagate the Christian Faith in the World. Though it is observed by some of the Ancient Fathers, and particularly by St. *Cyprian*, That God never sent a general Persecution upon the Christian Church, but when their Sins, the general declension of Piety and Discipline, their Worldly-Mindedness, the formality and coldness of their Devotions called for a Scourge.

Thus it was with the Church, while it sojourned, as I may so speak, in the world as in a strange land, had no place of its own, no earthly Power and Authority to support it, but lived under Pagan Powers, was intermixt with them, and oppressed by them, when they pleased; but the case of a Christian Nation, where the Power and Authority is Christian, seems very different, and to come nearer the state of the *Jewish* Church; for God does not use to inflict Publick Judgments and Calamities upon Nations,

but

but for the Puniſhment of ſome Publick and National Sins: And, therefore a Chriſtian Nation, which profeſſes the True Faith and Worſhip of Chriſt, preſerves the Reverence of Religion, corrects and ſuppreſſes Vice, may expect to be bleſſed with all external Proſperity; *for righteouſneſs exalteth a nation*; it does ſo in its natural tendency and effects, and it does ſo by the Bleſſing of God; and therefore when God brings any Publick Judgments upon a Nation profeſſing the true faith of Chriſt, we have reaſon to take notice of God's Anger and Diſpleaſure; to enquire what is amiſs among us; what that accurſed thing is, which hath provoked God to Jealouſy, and made him take the Rod into his hand. We have then reaſon to humble our ſelves before God, to deprecate his Anger and Diſpleaſure; to turn from all the evil of our ways, that he may return, and be merciful to us.

But there is one thing worth obſerving, which may be matter of Hope and Comfort to us at this time, That God never delivered the *Jewiſh* Church into the hands of their Enemies to oppreſs them, never carried them away

into captivity, excepting the last Destruction of *Jerusalem*, in Punishment of their Sin in Crucifying their Messias, but only when they were guilty of Idolatry: A Corruption of Manners might bring other Judgments upon them; but it was generally, and I think always, for their Idolatry, that God made their Enemies rule over them, and carried them captive into a Strange land. This we have a summary account of, *Judges* 2. how that after the Death of *Joshua* and those Elders who had seen all that God did for them, *they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and God deliver'd them into the hand of spoilers, who spoiled them, v.* 11, 12, &c. For this Sin of Idolatry, the Ten Tribes were carried away into a Perpetual Captivity, and *Judah* carried captive to *Babylon*, which they were threatned with by the Prophets, for their *Whoredoms*, that is, their Idolatries, 2, 4, 5. ch. of *Hosea*; and this is the account the Prophet *Jeremy* gives of it, *Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land which is not yours*, 5. Jer. 19. Now

Now in proportion to God's deal-g with the *Jewiſh* Church, we have aſon to hope, That though a Church nd Nation which profeſſes the true aith and Worſhip of Chriſt, may be verely puniſhed for their other Sins, et while they preſerve themſelves lean from Spiritual Fornication, from ll Antichriſtian Idolatries, God will ot Un-Church them, nor deliver them nally up into the Power of Idolatrous Oppreſſors: I am ſure we of this Na-ion, ever ſince the Reformation of Religion among us, though God has made us ſmart ſeverely for our other Sins, have yet always found a watch-ful Providence defending us from all Attempts, though contrived with Art nd Skill, and backed with Power, to educe us again under the *Roman* Yoke. May the ſame Good Providence ſtill watch over us, and defend us, and nei-ther ſuffer our Popiſh Enemies to rejoice over us, nor deluded Proteſtants to make dangerous and fatal Experiments.

3*dly*. When God did think fit to correct his People, he always kept the Rod in his own hand, and preſcribed the Meaſures and Continuance of their Sufferings. This is ſo plain, from all the

the Promises and Threatnings of the Law, and from the Examples of God's Providence towards *Israel*, that there is no need to multiply particular Instances: There was no Good nor Evil befel *Israel*, but by a particular Providence; God inflicted Judgments on them when he saw fit, and he removed them again; He gave the Commission to Plague, and Sword, and Famine, which they could not exceed. In the 26. *Levit.* we may observe, That God proportion'd his Judgments to their Sins. When their Sins were grown so Publick and National, as to deserve some Publick Judgments, yet at first God threatens them with some more light and gentle Punishments; but if they continued incorrigible, he tells them he had more terrible Judgments in reserve for them; which proves, That God determines the Kinds, Degrees, and Continuance of his Judgments. When *David* for his sin in Numbring the People, had that hard Choice given him, *of seven years famine, or to flee three months before his enemies, or three days pestilence*; he answers, *Let me fall now into the hands of the Lord, (for his mercies are great)*

and

d let me not fall into the hand of man, Sam. 24. 14. That is, he choſe Pe-ilence before the Sword; for Peſti-ence is God's immediate hand; and ho the Sword be God's Judgment too, et it is put into the hands of men, who gratify their own Luſt and Rage, nd Revenge with it. And yet, tho God leaves more to man in this, than n any other Judgments, he does not ut the Sword wholly out of his own ands, when he puts it into the hands of men, but gives Laws to it; as ap-pears from the example of the King of *Aſſyria*, whom God ſent againſt *Jeru-ſalem, To take the ſpoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the ſtreet. Howbeit he meaneth not ſo, neither doth his heart think ſo, but it is in his heart to deſtroy, and cut off nations not a few: wherefore it ſhall come to paſs that when the Lord hath perform-ed his whole work upon mount Zion,* (what he himſelf, not what the King of *Aſſy-ria* intended to do), *I will puniſh the fruit of the ſtout heart of the king of Aſ-ſyria, and the glory of his high looks,* 10. Iſa. 5, 6, 7, —— 12.

Now God has the ſame tender care of a Chriſtian Nation, that he had of *Iſrael*;

Israel; He mingles our Cup for us, he prescribes what we shall suffer and how long: and he corrects as a Father, not to destroy, but to reform; and this is a mighty comfort, that whatever men threaten, we are in the hands of God, who has the Winds and Seas at his command, *who giveth Salvation to Kings, who delivereth David his Servant from the hurtful Sword*, Psal. 144. 10. The most powerful Oppressors are but the Rod of God's Anger; the more fierce and savage Instruments God employs to correct us, we may conclude, the more angry God is; but whatever the Rod is, it is God that strikes, who knows when to strike, and when to spare: We never have any reason to be afraid of men, whatever their Power, how great soever their Rage and Vengeance be; but ought to pray to God as the Prophet does, *O Lord correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing*, Jer. 10. 24. *O Lord rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy sore displeasure; have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak, O Lord heal me, for my bones are vexed*, Psal. 6. 1, 2. , or as it is in *Psal.* 56. 1, 2, 3. *Be merciful to me, O God,*

l, for man would ſwallow me up, he ting daily oppreſſeth me; mine ene- s would daily ſwallow me up, for they many that riſe up againſt me, O thou moſt gh. What time I am afraid, I will ſt in Thee; in God I will praiſe his rd; in God I have put my truſt, I will t fear what fleſh can do unto me.

4*thly*, When God does think fit to rrect his People, yet he always re- oves his Judgments upon their ſincere epentance: This was God's expreſs ovenant with *Iſrael*, 26. *Levit.* 40, 1, 42. *If they ſhall confeſs their iniqui- , and the iniquity of their Fathers, ith the treſpaſs which they treſpaſſed ainſt me; and alſo that they have walk- contrary to me, and that I alſo have alked contrary to them, and have brought em into the Land of their Enemies; then their uncircumciſed hearts be hum- led, and they then accept of the puniſh- ent of their iniquities, then will I re- ember my Covenant with* Jacob, *and al- o my Covenant with* Iſaac, *and alſo my Covenant with* Abraham *will I remember, nd I will remember the land.*

Thus in the time of the Judges, when God for their ſins delivered them into the hands of their Enemies, when they

they cried to God, he raised up Saviours for them: Nay, many times, when their Repentance was not very sincere, nor lasting, yet in great goodness and compassion he spared them: *When he slew them, then they sought him, and returned, and enquired early after God; and they remembred that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer; nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongue, for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant; but he being full of compassion forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not; yea many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath; for he remembred that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again*, 78. Psalm 34, *&c.*

So that how angry soever God be, we have a certain way of appeasing his anger. Nothing but sin can provoke a merciful God, and a compassionate Father to punish; He has a great tenderness for all his Creatures; *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*; and therefore he is more easily appeased, than he is provoked;

Judgment

gment is his ſtrange Work, but he ights in Acts of Mercy, and ſeems aſed with an honourable occaſion ſhew mercy, without expoſing his ws and Government to contempt: d therefore Repentance and Refor- ation will always appeaſe him; nay metimes we ſee, that the very ſhews d appearance of a publick and ſolemn pentance, though it be not ſo ſin- re and hearty as it ought to be, akes him ſtay his hand, and expect r return. And this is a great encou- gement, and a Powerful obligation on to return to God when he ſtrikes, humble our ſelves under his mighty nd, for there is no other way to re- ove his Judgments, and this will do

It is a vain thing to truſt in Armies d Navies, in the Courage and Con- uct of Princes and Generals, when ur Sins fight againſt us, when God fuſes to go forth with our Armies: r *no King is ſaved by the multitude of hoſt; a horſe is a vain thing for ſafe- , neither ſhall he deliver any by his reat ſtrength; but the eyes of the Lord re upon them that fear him, upon them that ope in his mercies.* 33. Pſal. 16, 17, 18.

Nay,

Nay, the justice and righteousness of our Cause will not always secure us of Success; for those who have a very just Cause, may deserve to be punished, and then God may justly punish them, and deliver them into the hands of their Enemies: God does not always determine what is Right and Wrong by the events of War; for he is the Sovereign Judge of the World, and may punish a wicked Nation by unjust Oppressors, as he often did the *Israelites*.

The Profession of the true Religion will not always secure us, when our Sins cry for Vengeance: When the *Jews* cried, *The Temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*; the Prophet told them, *They trusted in lying words; for will ye steal, and murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsly, and burn incense to Baal, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?* 7 Jer. 4, --- 10. To glory in the profession of the true Faith, or in a vigorous opposition to the Errors and Corruptions of Religion, when we are Atheists or Infidels in our Lives, may make God punish us, but is no reason on our part, why he should

save

ave us; but true and ſincere Repen-
ance will ſave us. We profeſs the ſin-
ere Faith of Chriſt, we fight in a juſt
auſe, if it be lawful to defend our
elves againſt the powerful Oppreſſor
f the Proteſtant, that is, the true
hriſtian Faith, and the Liberties of
Europe; and we have no reaſon to fear
ny thing but our ſins: Let us but re-
orm our Lives, and put away the evil
f our doings, and our Arms will be as
roſperous, as our Cauſe is Juſt: God
ill then *gird our Princes and ſoldiers*
ith ſtrength to the battle; will teach
heir hands to war, and their fingers to
ght.

5*thly.* Faith and Prayer are more
owerful than Arms; as it muſt neceſ-
arily be, if God only gives Victory
nd Succeſs. This we learn from the
hole Hiſtory of the *Jews*; the Apo-
le to the *Hebrews* gives us a particular
ccount of the Power of Faith, 11. *Heb.*
2, 33, 34. *Of Gideon, and Barach, and*
amſon, and Jeptha, and David, who
hrough faith ſubdued kingdoms, wrought
ighteouſneſs, obtained promiſes, ſtopped
he mouths of lions, quenched the violence
f fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword, out
f weakneſs were made ſtrong, waxed vali-

valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. *Moses* his Prayer was more powerful than *Joshua*'s Arms; for *when Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed; when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed*, 17. Exo. 11. *Hezekiah*'s Prayer overthrew the *Assyrian* Army, when *Rabshekah* came against *Jerusalem*, and reproached them with their Trust in God. We must not indeed expect such miraculous Victories as God gave to *Israel*; but this makes no difference; for the Power of Faith and Prayer is the same still; and all Victory is God's still, who gives Success as well by invisible Means, and seeming Accidents, as by the most visible interposal of a miraculous Power: For God gave *Israel* miraculous Deliverances; not because he could not save them without a miracle, but because he would make it visible to all the world, That he was their Saviour. But still God hears our Prayers, and answers them; he is still the Saviour and Deliverer of all those who trust in him, and hope in his Mercy; and therefore the only sure way to conquer our Enemies, is to prevail with God by our fervent and importunate prayers for a Blessing upon

n our Arms; to pray in Faith, in
e, with an entire dependance on
, and a perfect Reſignatiou to his
: Thus *Gideon*, and *Barak*, and
id, and the Worthies of old, ſub-
d Kingdoms, waxed valiant in fight,
turned to flight the Armies of Ali-
; and there is no other way that I
w of, ſtill: If God be ſtill the only
r of Victory, Faith and Prayer is
the only way to obtain Victory
God; and therefore if we are
and remiſs in our Prayers; if
do not pray at all, or expect no-
g from our Prayers, let us not
ge any ill ſucceſs to ill conduct or
ardize, but to our Infidelity and
igion; and indeed this is the only
ncholly Conſideration in our pre-
Circumſtances; if the Courage
Conduct of a Prince, if the Brave-
and Reſolution of Soldiers, if a
nerous Army and Navy, if an Arm
leſh could give Victory, we have
on to hope well; but if God go
forth with our Armies, all our
r Preparations are vain; and how
we expect that, when we will not
it, or only mock God with ſome
nal and cuſtomary addreſſes, with-

out being concern'd whether he hears o
no; or without expecting or at leaſt with
out truſting and depending on his help

6thly. But to encourage thoſe good
men, how few ſoever there are among
us, who have a great ſenſe of the
Divine Providence, and a firm Trust
and Faith in God, to be very im
portunate in their Prayers for the
Church and Nation, I obſerve farther
That God many times has ſpared
wicked People at the earneſt interceſſi
ons of ſome few good men. Thus
the interceſſion of *Abraham*, God pro
miſed to have ſpared *Sodom*, had there
been ten righteous perſons found
that great City: God ſpared *Iſrael*
when they had ſo provok'd him by
their Idolatries, that he threatned
deſtroy them, only at the importuni
of *Moſes*, as the Pſalmiſt obſerves; *there
fore he ſaid, he would deſtroy them*, h
*not Moſes his choſen ſtood before him
the breach, to turn away his wrath,
be ſhould deſtroy them*, 106. Pſal. 23.
Story of which we have, 32. *Exod.* 7,
At another time, when they had pro
voked God by their Idolatries a
Whoredoms with the Daughters
Moab, and the Plague broke in amo
tha

em, *then ſtood up Phineas and execu-*
l judgment, and the plague was ſtayed,
. *Numb.* And therefore when God
clared his reſolution to puniſh them,
forbad his Prophet ſo much as to
ay for them, 7. *Jer.* 16. And in 14.
ek. 14. profeſſes, That he would not
cept of any Interceſſions for them:
o theſe three men, Noah, Daniel, and
b, were in it, yet they ſhall deliver
t their own ſouls by their righteouſneſs,
ith the Lord; Which ſuppoſes, that
another time, the Interceſſions of
eſe good men would have prevailed;
d that it is very extraordinary for God
deny it.

And if the importunate Prayers of
few good men may obtain Victory
nd Succeſs, and ſave a Church and
ation; let every good man at this
me cry mightily to God, eſpecially as
he Prophet *Iſaiah* exhorts, *Ye that*
ake mention of the Lord, keep not ſilence,
nd give him no reſt, till he make Jeruſa-
em a praiſe in the earth, 62. *Iſa.* 6, 7.

7thly. To add no more, and it is a
ery comfortable Conſideration, God
many times ſaved *Iſrael* for his own
Names ſake, when their ſins provoked
him to deſtroy them. 48. *Iſa.* 9. *For*

my name ſake will I defer mine anger, and for my praiſe will I refrain for Thee, that I cut Thee not off. 11. *v. For mine own ſake, even for mine own ſake will I do it; for how ſhould my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory to another.* Thus God aſſigns the reaſon, why he did not deſtroy *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, when they ſo highly provoked him. *I wrought for my name ſake, that it ſhould not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whoſe ſight I made my ſelf known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt,* 20. *Ezek.* 9. That is, they were God's peculiar people, the only worſhippers of the Lord *Jehovah*, whom he had brought out of *Ægypt* by a mighty hand, to make his Name known in the world; and though they never ſo much deſerved to be deſtroyed, had he then deſtroyed them, his own great Name would have ſuffered with them; as *Moſes* pleaded with God; *Wherefore ſhould the Ægyptians ſay, For miſchief did he bring them out to ſlay them in the mountains, and to conſume them from the face of the earth?* 32. *Exod.* 12. And thus the Pſalmiſt prays, *Help us, O God of our ſalvation, for the glory of thy name,*

name, and deliver us, and purge away our ſins for thy name ſake; wherefore ſhould the Heathen ſay, Where is their God? let him be known among the Heathen in our ſight, by revenging the blood of thy ſervants, which is ſhed, 79. Pſalm 9, 10.

And this is matter of hope to us, That though our ſins are very great, yet God will not utterly deſtroy us, but will ſend deliverance for *his name ſake*; for the ſake of that holy Faith which is profeſſed among us; leſt our Antichriſtian Enemies ſhould triunph and ſay, *Where is now their God?* When the preſervation of a wicked people is for the defence and honour of the true Chriſtian Faith, we have reaſon to hope, and good men have a very powerful argument to plead with God, That *he will ſave us for his own Names ſake.*

SERMON IV.

reach'd before the Queen, at *Whitehall*, *February* the XIIth, 169½.

IV. MATTH. 1.

hen was Jeſus led up of the Spirit into the Wilderneſs, to be tempted of the Devil.

THE Temptation of our Saviour, after his faſting Forty Days, is a very proper Subject for our Meditation at this time; and ſuggeſts o many uſeful obſervations, that I hall not waſt any time in a needleſs reface; but ſhall 1. Conſider in gene-al, what concerns his Temptation; nd 2. Explain the Nature of thoſe particular Temptations wherewith the Devil aſſaulted him.

1. In general, Concerning our Saviour's being tempted by the Devil: Now to tempt, is to make a Tryal and Expe-

Experiment; and when the Devil tempts, it is to try, if he can perſwade, or ſeduce us from the Fear, and Worſhip, and Obedience of God.

1. Now in the firſt place it is very obſervable, that Chriſt himſelf, when he became Man, was tempted of the Devil; and there is no greater myſtery in this, than that he was liable to hunger and cold, and had all the innocent Appetites, Inclinations, Infirmities of Humane nature; that is, That he was a true and real Man. The Ancients generally conclude, that the Devil did not know at this time, how great a Perſon our Saviour was, even the Eternal Son of God; for it is hardly credible, that had he known this, he would have made ſo vain and hopeleſs an attempt on him: It is likely enough, he thought him to be ſome extraordinary perſon; He knew by the Ancient Prophecies, that the *Meſſias* was to appear; and knew from the Prophet *Daniel*, that the time for his coming was accompliſhed; nay, it is probable, he knew all the circumſtances of his Birth, and heard that teſtimony God gave him at his Baptiſm, *This is my beloved Son*; but he

ſaw

ſaw he was a Man, though an extraordinary Man; and might not know that he was any thing more; and having formerly foiled our firſt Parents in Paradiſe, in the ſtate of innocence, hoped for the like ſucceſs again.

Now if Chriſt himſelf was tempted by the Devil, none of us muſt hope to eſcape; tempted we ſhall be, and therefore muſt take care to ſtand upon our guard, and to fortify our Minds againſt all temptations.

And this encouragement we have from the Example of our Saviour, that to be tempted is no Sin, unleſs we yield to a temptation; for He was tempted as we are, yet without ſin; and we cannot imagine, had it been a ſin to be tempted, that God would have permitted the Devil to have tempted our Saviour; which may eaſe the fears of ſome Melancholly Chriſtians, who are afflicted with evil and tempting thoughts which their Souls abhor; for whatever the cauſe of ſuch thoughts be, whether a frighted and diſturbed imagination, or the ſuggeſtion of wicked Spirits, they can no more defile the Soul, which abhors and rejects them with grief and indignation, than they can

the

the Paper, on which they are writ.

Nay, hence we learn, that God many times exerciſes thoſe with the greateſt and moſt difficult Tryals and Temptations; who are moſt dear to him. He had no ſooner proclaimed Chriſt his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed, but he leads him by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs, to be tempted of the Devil.

This Life is a State of Tryal and Probation; and Temptations, though they create ſome trouble and difficulty to good men, yet do them no hurt. If good men Conquer, Temptations do but exerciſe, encreaſe, and confirm their Graces, and make them great and illuſtrious examples to the World, glorify the Divine Power in the Victories and Triumphs of his Servants, over the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil; give them a ſecure hope in God, and a tranſporting ſenſe of his Love, and prepare great rewards for them in the next Life. And if they happen in any particular encounter to be overcome, as St. *Peter* himſelf was, when he denied his Maſter; yet they riſe again with glory; and the ſenſe of their ſin, and the ſhame of a defeat, fills them with

with ſorrow, indignation, ſelf-revenge, gives them new ſpirit, vigour, activity, reſolution, makes them more patient of hardſhips and ſufferings, more unwearied in doing good, more humble and modeſt, and more perfectly reſigned to the Will of God, to diſpoſe of them and their Services to his own Glory, as he pleaſes.

God does not train up thoſe whom he Loves, and whom he prepares for Glory, in eaſe and ſoftneſs; *Whom the Lord loveth he chaſtneth; and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth:* And the more difficult Temptations he expoſes us to, the greater honour he does us; the more glorious will our Triumphs, the richer and brighter will our Crowns be. Let us then behold our Saviour in the Wilderneſs, ſeparated from humane converſation, and all the comforts of Life, in the midſt of wild Beaſts and tempting Spirits, and not think, that God uſes us hardly, if at any time he lets looſe the Tempter upon us, and gives him power over all we have, as he did in the Caſe of *Job*, to afflict us in our Relations, our Bodies, our Eſtates, good Names, or whatever gives us the ſharpeſt and keen-

keeneſt ſenſe of ſuffering, and is the moſt difficult exerciſe of our Faith.

2. Let us conſider the time when our Saviour was tempted, *viz.* immediately after his Baptiſm, *being full of the Holy Ghoſt*, 4. Luke 1.

1. As ſoon as our Saviour was baptized, he was led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs. For *Then* in my Text relates to the time of his Baptiſm; and St. *Luke* tells us, this was done in his return from *Jordan*, where he was baptized by *John*.

By this Religious Rite, our Saviour had devoted himſelf to the immediate ſervice of God in the Salvation of Mankind, and was inaugurated into his Prophetick Office, by that Teſtimony which was given to him by a Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed*; and this was the Critical time, both for the Devil to tempt, and for our Saviour to baffle all his temptations, and to triumph over him.

Could the Devil have conquered our Saviour in this firſt aſſault, there had been an end of this Glorious deſign of mans Salvation, when he had enſlaved and captivated the Saviour himſelf; and

nd therefore he began as early with he ſecond *Adam*, as he did with the irſt, though not with the like ſucceſs. Had our firſt parents reſiſted the firſt emptation, we had been happy for ver; but they yielded and brought eath upon themſelves and their Poſte-ity; but the ſeed of the Woman, whom God had promiſed ſhould reak the Serpents Head, who *was ade manifeſt to deſtroy the works*, the Kingdom and the Power *of the Devil*, by God's order and appointment, firſt en-ounters him in his own perſon, reſiſts is moſt furious aſſaults, makes him re-reat with ſhame and deſpair, as foreſee-ng his own deſtiny, and the final deſtru-ction of his Kingdom. As the old Ser-ent ſeduced our firſt Parents in Para-dice, and brought ſin and miſery and eath into the world, ſo it was very itting that the Saviour of Mankind hould give the firſt proof of his Divine power in conquering the Tempter.

This gives us great encouragement to fight under Chriſt's Banners againſt the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil; for the Captain of our Salvation has al-ready conquered, and if we are not wanting to our ſelves, we *ſhall be more than*

than Conquerors through Chriſt who ſtrengthens us.

He knows what the power of temptations is, and what meaſures of Grace are neceſſary to reſiſt them; and if we do not forſake him, he will not forſake us. He has conquered himſelf, and knows how to conquer; and if we faithfully adhere to him, we ſhall conquer too.

Nay, in caſe we ſhould ſome time be conquered, this has made him *a merciful and compaſſionate High Prieſt, being in all things tempted like as we are*: He knows the weakneſs of humane nature, and the power and ſubtilty of the Tempter, and prays for us, as he did for St. *Peter*, *That our faith fail not*; that if we fall, we may riſe again by Repentance: And this is a mighty Conſolation, *That if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*, who is not only a Propitiation for our Sins, but was tempted alſo, as we are.

2*ly*. St. *Luke* obſerves, that our Saviour was *full of the Holy Ghoſt*, (which he received without meaſure at his Baptiſm, when the Holy Ghoſt deſcended like a Dove, and reſted on him) before

fore he was led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs to be tempted of the Devil.

For Human Nature (and it was the Human Nature of Chriſt on which the Holy Ghoſt deſcended) cannot reſiſt ſuch powerful Aſſaults without Divine Aſſiſtances. And the Example of our Saviour aſſures us, that God will not expoſe us to any Temptations, without giving us proportionable meaſures of Grace to reſiſt them: That if we are at any time conquered, it is not for want of power, but for want of will to conquer: that is, the fault is wholly our own, and we cannot blame God for it.

I doubt, there are few men in the world but the Devil (had he the full power of tempting) could find out ſome Temptations too big for them; but the Divine Goodneſs is ſeen, as well in reſtraining the power of the Devil, that we ſhall not be tempted above what we are able to bear, as by the ſtrengthning our minds by the internal Aſſiſtances of his Grace; and therefore our Saviour has taught us to pray, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,* ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ, from the wicked One; which does not ſignify, that we may never be

tempted, which is impossible, while we live in Bodies of Flesh and Blood, and are incompassed with all the Flattering Objects of Flesh and Sense; but that God would not give us up into the power of the Devil, to be tempted above what we are able.

Some of the Ancients observe from this Story, That when we devote and consecrate our selves to God, we must expect to be tempted as our Saviour was: As for bad men, who are the Slaves and Vassals of the Devil, he cannot so properly be said to tempt, as to govern them; for *he is the Spirit that worketh in the Children of disobedience:* but when men desert his service, he is very busie to recover his Slaves again; but then our comfort and security too, is, That when we give up our selves to the Service of God, he takes us into his protection; the Wicked One cannot touch us without his leave, and he always proportions our Trials to our Strength.

3*dly*, Consider the Place of our Saviour's Temtation, *He was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness*, where there were no tempting Objects, but yet there the tempting Spirit found him.

Some

Some men think, that the ſureſt way
get rid of Temptations, is to get
t of the World; to withdraw them-
ves from Human Converſation; or
make a ſhew of doing it, without
ing it; as if the Devil could not
llow them into a Deſert, or a Cell.
hile we live in Bodies of Fleſh and
ood we may be tempted where-ever
e are: If we mortify our Senſual Ap-
tites, and our love to this World,
e may live very innocently in the
orld; if we do not, we can never
t rid of the World, but where-ever
e go, we carry it in our hearts.

Do theſe men imagine, they can ne-
r be tempted to luſt, unleſs they daily
e and converſe with beautiful Women?
that they cannot love the World
ithout living in a Court, and enjoy-
g all the eaſe and luxury of a Plentiful
rtune? or that it is not poſſible to
ſpiſe the World with as much haughti-
ſs and vanity of mind, as any
an has, who moſt admires it? That a
onk can't be as proud as an Emperor,
nd glory as much in a ſullen Retire-
ent, in Voluntary Auſterities, in an
ffected Poverty, in a Vain Opinion
f extraordinary Sanctity, as any Man

can do in Wealth and Power? Whence came all thoſe Superſtitions, which have corrupted both the Faith and Worſhip of Chriſtianity, and done more miſchief to the Church and Religion than all the looſeneſs of a Secular Life but from Deſarts and the Cells of Monks and Hermites? Which proves that the Devil has his Temptations for the Wilderneſs, as well as for the Court; for the moſt Religious Devotees, and Melancholly Enthuſiaſts, as well as for the Men of this World; and thoſe the moſt dangerous Temptations too; which as experience tells us, open a back-door for Pride and Ambition, and Secular Power, and a general corruption of Manners to enter into the Church and into the Lives of Chriſtians: And therefore we muſt guard our ſelves againſt the Tempter as well in our greateſt ſolitudes and retirements from the World, as in a croud of buſineſs. We muſt have a care of the temptations of Devotion, and Mortification, of Faſtings and Penances, of a ſullen diſcontent at this World, as well as of the temptations of a buſie Life, and of an eaſie and proſperous Fortune.

4thly

4thly, I obſerve, That Chriſt *was led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs*, to be tempted of the Devil; that is, It was God's appointment, not his own voluntary choice. And this Teaches us manfully to reſiſt Temptations, when the Providence of God, and the unavoidable circumſtances of our Condition bring us into Temptations, but not preſumptuouſly to thruſt our ſelves into them.

There is always danger in Temptations, eſpecially when we raſhly venture upon them. *Let not him that putteth on his Armour, boaſt, as he that putteth it off*, is true in our Spiritual Warfare. We have ſeen great Men conquered, even St. *Peter* himſelf; and therefore, *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall*, and not unneceſſarily venture too near a Precipice, where he may be in danger of falling.

Our Saviour has taught us to pray, that God would not lead us into Temptation, as I obſerved before; much leſs then ought we to lead our ſelves into Temptation. We may eaſily preſume too far upon the ſtrength of our Faith, our Courage, our Reſolution, as

St. *Peter* did, who had he been more diffident of himſelf, had kept out of the High-Prieſt's Hall, and eſcaped the Temptation, which he could not reſiſt.

We daily ſee, that Men who preſume upon the Strength of their Conſtitution, and uſe their Bodies ill, deſtroy their Health, and ſhorten their Lives, while Men who feel their own weak and crazy Temper, live on with Care to a good Old Age; and thus it is with reſpect to the Mind, as well as to the Body: Preſumption will deſtroy thoſe, whom Fear and Caution will ſecure; and therefore, *let us not be high-minded, but fear.*

There are a great many ways, whereby Men expoſe themſelves to Temptation, and tempt even the Tempter; ſome of which are very obvious: As to keep Ill Company, whoſe Converſation is a daily Temptation: Sloth and Idleneſs, which betrays Men to any Wickedneſs which offers its ſelf: For it is an uneaſie thing to have nothing to do, and that it ſelf is a Temptation, and the Devil never wants Buſineſs to employ ſuch Men in; and I know nothing worſe than this, but when

when Men chooſe ſuch Buſineſs, as is nothing elſe but Idleneſs and Vanity, or can only miniſter to their own, or to other Mens Luſts.

But there are other ways, whereby Men thruſt themſelves into Temptations, without conſidering what they do. I might name many, but ſhall content my ſelf with ſome few at preſent, which are leaſt obſerved, and which prove Snares to good Men; as for inſtance: To impoſe upon our ſelves conſtant Tasks of Religion, that we will Read and Pray ſo much, and ſo often every Day, and obſerve voluntary Faſts, and abſtain from ſuch innocent Diverſions, *&c.* which Men commonly reſolve in ſome great Heats and Fits of Devotion, which they fancy will continue in the ſame fervour, but never do; and then theſe Tasks grow very uneaſie, as every thing of Religion does, when it grows a Task; and then they degenerate into dulneſs and formality, and then Men either leave them off, and with that are tempted to leave off Religion it ſelf; or they are ſo very cold, that they fancy themſelves ſpiritually dead, and fall into Melancholly, into Deſertions, into Deſpair it ſelf.

It is a dangerous thing for Men by raſh and arbitrary Vows, to tye themſelves up from doing that, which otherwiſe they might very innocently do, and which they will be ſtrongly tempted to do, when they have vowed not to do it. The Guides of Souls know, that this is no imaginary Caſe, but what they ſo often meet with, and ſee ſuch ill effects of, that it is very fit to warn Men of the Snare. Were there no other reaſon againſt the Monkiſh Vows of Celibacy, Poverty, and Obedience, I ſhould think this ſufficient, that conſidered only as perpetual Vows, they are a dangerous State of Temptation; and for my own part, I would never adviſe any Man to make a perpetual Vow to do, or not to do any thing, which it is not perpetually his Duty to do, or not to do.

Thus to marry with Perſons of a diſagreeable Age, or a diſagreeable Humour, or a contrary Religion, is to put our ſelves into a ſtate of Temptation; but ſuch particular Inſtances would be endleſs, and therefore I forbear.

If God lead us into Temptation, he will give us ſufficient ſtrength to reſiſt, if

we improve his Grace; if we lead ur ſelves into Temptation, and God eave us to the power and ſubtilty of he Tempter, the ſin and the folly is ur own.

5thly, I obſerve by what means our Saviour conquered the Devil's Temptations, and that was by the Authority, nd by the Word of God: *It is written, Man ſhall not live by bread alone. It is written, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God. It is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* Theſe are ſuch Anſwers, as would admit of no Reply; for the Authority of God can never be anſwered.

And thus we muſt conquer alſo, if ever we will conquer, by a firm Faith in God, and Belief of his Word: Faith is our Shield, and the Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit, and we have no other ſure Defence againſt all Temptations.

This ruined our firſt Parents in Paradiſe, when their Reaſon and Natural Powers were in their greateſt Vigour, Perfection, and Integrity, that inſtead of inſiſting on God's Authority, they ventured

ventured to reaſon the Caſe with the Tempter. Set aſide the Authority of God, and the Devil will quickly out-wit, and out-reaſon us; he is skilled in all the Arts of Deceit, and Methods of Perſwaſions; and without God's Authority, our Courage, our Reſolution, our Honour, our Reaſon it ſelf, even all the Rants and triumphant Speculations of Philoſophy, will fail us in the Day of Trial: to Tempt, is either to deceive, or to perſwade, and there is no other ſecure defence againſt either but the Authority, and the Word of God. The wiſeſt Reaſoner may be impoſed on by ſo artificial a Tempter; but God can neither deceive, nor be deceived; and then while we believe God, and have regard to his Commands, we cannot be deceived neither: And what is able to reſiſt all the Terrors and Flatteries of the World, and the Fleſh, but the Authority of that God who is our Maker, and our Judge? What inſignificant Names are Virtue and Vice, how weak and feeble is the ſenſe of Decency and Honour, and the Dignity of Human Nature, and of a Life of Reaſon (after we have read or writ ſo many Volumes about it) when we feel the ſoft Charms

Charms of Pleaſure, and our Eyes are filled with viſible Glories? Who would not part with a fine Thought or two, with ſome pretty Notions of Moral Beauty, and Intellectual Pleaſures, for a Happineſs which may be ſeen and felt? But the Authority of *GOD*, the firm belief of his Promiſes and Threatnings, the hopes and fears of another World, are beyond all other Perſwaſions, unleſs any thing can perſwade a Man to be eternally miſerable.

This may ſuffice to be ſpoke in General, concerning our Saviour's Temptation. We come now to conſider,

II. The particular Temptations wherewith our Saviour was Aſſaulted, and they are Three.

1. The firſt was to relieve his Hunger, after his long faſting, by working a Miracle: *And when the Tempter came to him, he ſaid, If thou be the Son of God, command that theſe ſtones be made bread.*

This was a very artificial Temptation, which it may be none but Chriſt himſelf would have been aware of: For what hurt was it, for the Son of God to work a Miracle? What hurt was it for a Man, who was Hungry, to relieve

lieve his Hunger? For here was no Temptation to exceſs, but to ſatisfy the neceſſities of Nature: What hurt was it for him, who afterwards fed ſo many Thouſands by Miracles, in this great Diſtreſs to have wrought a Miracle to ſatisfy his own Hunger? This was very plauſible, and looked like very charitable Advice; but yet there was a ſecret Snare in it.

1*ſt*, For this was made a Trial, whether he were the Son of God or not, *If thou be the Son of God, command that theſe ſtones be made bread:* Now had he complied with this, it had argued a diſtruſt of his Relation to God, and of the Love of his Father; and this was a Temptation to Sin. Thus the Tempter dealt with our firſt Parents, made them jealous of God's good Intentions towards them, and by that Tempted them to Diſobedience. *The Serpent ſaid unto the Woman, Ye ſhall not ſurely die. For God knoweth, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* That is, God envies your Happineſs, and therefore has forbid you to Eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Thus

Thus the Devil ſuggeſted to our Saviour, that he had great reaſon to queſtion, whether he were the Son of God, becauſe he was deſtitute of all the Comforts and Supports of Life, and after forty Days faſting had nothing in the Wilderneſs to Eat, unleſs he would turn Stones into Bread.

And though this part of the Temptation our Saviour takes no notice of in his Anſwer, but ſcorns it; yet we find it makes a very powerful Impreſſion upon other Men, who are apt to meaſure God's Love or Hatred by preſent things; when they are Proſperous, they conclude they are the Favourites of Heaven; when they are Afflicted and meet with croſs Events, then God is angry with them, and has forſaken them: And though this argues ſuch a ſtupid Ignorance of Chriſtianity, that one would think it could be no Temptation to a Chriſtian; yet it is too Notorious, that three parts of the Melancholy, the Deſertions, nay deſpair of many Chriſtians, is owing to no other Cauſe: they think their Condition ſafe for the next World, while they are Proſperous in this; but as ſoon as the World begins to Frown, they

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are irrecoverably Damned; but would ſuch men conſider, that our Saviour himſelf wanted Bread in the Wilderneſs, and had no place whereon to lay his Head; it would cure theſe Deſertions, if there be no greater Guilt, which a ſtrait Fortune awakens the ſenſe of, which I doubt is too often the Caſe.

2*dly*, There was another Snare in this, to perſwade our Saviour, to ſupply the neceſſities of Nature by extraordinary means, without the immediate Direction and Command of God; for this had been a diſtruſt of God's Care and Providence, to have relieved his own wants by preternatural and uncommanded Methods: And therefore to this he Anſwers, *It is written, Man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* That is, Bread indeed is the ordinary Proviſion God has made for the ſupport of Man's Life; but when theſe ordinary and natural Proviſions fail, he has other ways to ſupport Life, as he fed the *Iſraelites* with Manna and Quails in the Wilderneſs, and gave them Drink out of a Rock; but then we muſt patiently and ſecurely expect by what

hat means God will provide for us; d till the *word proceed out of his mouth*, ll we have ſome particular Command nd Direction for it, we muſt take no xtraordinary, Uncommanded, much ſs Forbidden ways, to preſerve our ives: for this is want of Truſt in God, r want of Submiſſion to his Will. xtream want and neceſſity is almoſt n irreſiſtible Temptation to humane lature, to diſtruſt the ordinary Proviſions of Providence, and to provide or our ſelves by what means we can; nd to juſtify what we do by ſuch neeſſities: it requires a great degree of aith and Truſt in God, when we have o Proſpect of ordinary Succours, patintly to expect God's Proviſion, without going out of God's way: But hus our Saviour was Tempted, and as taught us how to conquer this Temptation, *Man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God:* If Bread fail, we muſt expect by what other means God will ſupply our Wants, and not tranſgreſs thoſe Laws God hath preſcribed us, how deſperate ſoever our Condition ſeem to be.

2*dly*,

2*dly*, The next Temptation is in the other extreme, to presume so far upon his Interest in God's Favour and Protection, as to make dangerous and vain-glorious Experiments of God's care. *He set him upon a pinacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thy self down: for it is written, He shall give his Angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou shouldst dash thy foot against the stone.*

When the Tempter perceived, that Christ wholly relied on the Directions and Authority of Scripture, he inforces his Temptation with Scripture too, misunderstood and misapplied. And these are the most dangerous Temptations of all, which impose upon Men with a shew of Religion, as our late Experience of a wild Enthusiastic Age will tell us; when nothing so bad could be thought of, but some Men had Scripture-Examples, or Precepts, or Prophesies, or Parables, to justifie it; and therefore we must be aware of this, as well as of all the other Arts and Stratagems of the Tempter.

In answer to this our Saviour proves, that this Text could not mean, that God

God would command his Angels to bear him up in their hands, if he ſhould fling himſelf from the Pinacle of the Temple, becauſe we are expreſly forbid, to make ſuch Experiments of God's Protection, as this: *It is written, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

To tempt is to try, and to tempt God is to try what he will, or can do for us, beyond his Promiſe, and beyond the ordinary Methods of his Providence; eſpecially when we either murmur againſt God, for not anſwering our unreaſonable demands, or preſume upon his favour to do that, which he has forbid us to do, or expect his Protection and Bleſſing, when we put our ſelves out of the ordinary Protection of his Providence: it were eaſie, had I time, to give inſtances of all theſe ways of tempting God; the Temptation of our Saviour concerns the laſt I mentioned, out of a vain-glorious humour, and a preſumption of God's peculiar favour to us, voluntarily without any reaſonable pretence, much leſs neceſſity, to thruſt our ſelves into apparent and unavoidable Dangers, and expect God ſhould ſave us by Miracles: for this is what our Saviour

was tempted to, to fling himself down from the Pinacle of the Temple, in a presumptuous confidence of God's care of him, that he would command his Angels to bear him up in their hands.

This looks like Faith in God, a plerophory of Hope, and full assurance of his Love, but indeed is Vanity, Pride, Insolence, Presumption, and a tempting of *God*. It is such an Affront and Indignity, as wise Men will not bear from their best Friends, when they impose upon them, not to do them a real kindness, but to gratifie their vanity and humour in such Demands, as a wise Man cannot honourably grant.

And yet there is a more dangerous and fatal Presumption than this, when men have such a strong Imagination of their being the Sons, the Chosen and Elect People of God, that they think they cannot do any thing to forfeit God's Love: they may make more bold with *God's* Laws than other Men, for *God sees no sin in his People*; nay indeed, that it is no Sin to advance themselves, and the Cause they have Espoused, which they call the Glory of God, by extraordinary means, that is by transgressing all the known and ordinary

linary Rules of Juſtice and Charity.

Theſe are dangerous Temptations, nd we have ſeen the miſerable Effects f them; and therefore let no man hink, that he is ſo great a favorite of Heaven, as to have God at his beck o ſave him by Miracles, when he vilfully expoſes himſelf to ſuch Dan-ers, as nothing but Miracles can De-ver him from; much leſs to think, hat God will alter the nature of Good nd Evil for his ſake; that he will diſ-enſe with his Laws, (Laws which re as Eternal and Unchangeable as is own Nature) when ever ſuch vain nthuſiaſts pretend to ſerve themſelves, nd his Glory by the breach of them: *t is written, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

3. Theſe two Temptations were ma-aged with great Art to deceive; the hird is open and bare-faced. The Devil in expreſs words tempts him to dolatry, with the Promiſe of all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glo-y of them; which he had drawn a beautiful Landskip of, and ſhew'd him rom a high Mountain: *All theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me:* Or as St. *Luke*

relates it, *All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for it is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it.* Which in some sense was true at that time; not that the Devil had the Supreme and Absolute disposal of Kingdoms, for St. *Paul* assures us, that all the Powers even of the Pagan
13 Rom 1. World, were *of God, and ordained by God.* But yet he was at that time the God of this World, and had a more visible Kingdom than God himself. The true Worshippers of God were at that time chiefly confined to *Judea*, a very little spot of Earth; but all the Power and Glory of the World was in the hands of Idolaters, who Worshipped the Devil and wicked Spirits: And the force of the Argument is, as if he had said to our Saviour, You call your self the Son of God, and Worship him, but will God do that for you, which I can and will do, if you Worship me? You your self see, that he has no Kingdom but *Judea* to bestow on you, and that also is at present in the hands of my Worshippers; but what is that to all the Kingdoms of the World, which are at my disposal and which you see your self are mine,

and

nd under my Government. But our aviour without diſputing the value of is World, or what Power the Devil ad in the diſpoſal of it, chides away e Tempter with Indignation, Be gone atan, *For it is written, Thou ſhalt wor-ip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt ou ſerve.* But though Chriſt refuſed is proffer, his pretended Vicar has ken it, and revived the old Pagan olatry for the Kingdoms of the orld, and the Glory of them.

This is the prevailing Temptation this day, to corrupt Religion, the ith and Worſhip of God, for ſome mporal Advantages: too many Men ink That the beſt Religion, which ill beſt ſerve a ſecular Intereſt; nd we have reaſon to think, that o many do this, and know hat they do; that their furious eal for a falſe Religion is not all norance and Miſtake, but an undiſ-mbled Love of this World: For can e think, that the Devil never tempt-d any Man but Chriſt, knowingly nd willingly to renounce the true Re-gion, and the true Worſhip of God r this World? No doubt he does, nd very often prevails too; and theſe

knowing Idolaters, who make a down-right bargain to Worship the Devil for the Kingdoms of the World and the Glory of them, are those who abuse the Ignorant and Credulous with a false and hypocritical Zeal.

But let us remember, that we must *Worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve:* Let us remember what our Saviour tells us, *What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Let us remember, that the end of Religion is to please God, to Glorify him, to be like him, and to enjoy him for ever; and this will give us a secure Victory over the World and the Devil: *Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ; To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever.* Amen.

SER

SERMON V.

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, at St. *Bridget's* Church, on *Tueſday* in *Eaſter*-Week, 1692.

IV. LUKE 35.

But love ye your enemies, —— (and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again) *and your reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the children of the Higheſt, for he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil.*

OUR Conformity to the Death and Reſurrection of our Saviour, conſiſts in dying to ſin, and walking in newneſs of life, which St. *Paul* tells us is repreſented by the External Ceremony of Baptiſm; the baptiſed Perſon being buried with Chriſt in Baptiſm, and riſing out of his watry grave a new born Creature, 6. *Rom.* 3, 4. *For in that he*

died, he died unto ſin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God: Likewiſe reckon ye alſo your ſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, 9, 10. And the principal Exerciſe of this Divine Life, which is our conformity to the Reſurrection of Chriſt, is a Divine Converſation. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God: Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth*, 3. Col. 1, 2. And *to ſet our affections on things above*, does not only ſignify to think ſometimes of Heaven, and to deſire to go to Heaven when we dye, which very worldly-minded men may do; but to lay up for our ſelves Treaſures in Heaven, which are durable and eternal, in oppoſition to thoſe periſhing Treaſures on Earth, which are ſubject to Thieves, to Moths and Ruſt. 6. *Matth.* 19, 20, 21. *To make to our ſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlaſting habitations*, 16. Luke 9. Now ye all know what this means: *viz.* To purge our minds from the love of Riches, and

from

om all covetous Deſires; to improve ur Eſtates in Acts of Piety and Cha- ty, for the Service of God, and to pply the wants of the poor and mi- rable: to return our Money into the ther World, where it will encreaſe nto Eternal Life and Glory: for this truly to have our Converſation in Heaven, to live above this World, to t looſe from all the Enjoyments of it; o live to God, and another World, o improve every thing we enjoy here, o ſecure and advance our future Hap- ineſs: when men are Charitable upon heſe Principles and theſe Deſigns, they muſt live a very heavenly Life; *For where our Treaſure is, there our hearts will be alſo.*

This our Anceſtors, who appoint- ed this Annual Solemnity, ſeem to have been very ſenſible of, That there is no particular Grace or Virtue, the exerciſe of which is a more viſible de- monſtration of a Divine and purified Mind, which is riſen with Chriſt, and lives to God, as Chriſt doth, than the Grace of Charity; and therefore that there was no time more proper to exerciſe Charity, and to exhort Chri-

Chriſtians to Charity, and to ſhow Charity in all its Pomp, and humble Bravery, than the Feaſt of the Reſurrection; wherein we commemorate the Love of our Lord in dying for us, and his triumph over Death, and in full aſſurance of a bleſſed Immortality, of which the Reſurrection of our Saviour was an ocular Demonſtration, ſend our Hearts and our Eyes after him to Heaven, and contemplate that Glory to which he is advanced, and to which he has promiſed to advance us.

This then is my proper work at this time, to exhort you to Charity; proper both to the nature of this Holy Feaſt, and to the original Inſtitution of this Solemnity; and it may reaſonably be hoped, that the Annual Returns of it, wherein all the Arguments to Charity are ſo earneſtly preſſed on you, ſhould keep this Divine Fire always burning and glowing in your Breaſts. You have ſo often heard all the Arguments to Charity, that it is impoſſible you ſhould forget them; and there is one that is worth all the reſt, which no Chriſtian can forget, who remembers that there is a Heaven and a Hell, and which no

Chriſti-

hriſtian can reſiſt, without deſpiſing is Soul, and Eternal Life and Death; nd that is, That Heaven is the Reward of Charity; that Hell is the Puiſhment of Uncharitableneſs; which is o plainly and expreſly taught, and ſo requently repeated by our Saviour, hat it is as certain and unavoidable, s that there is a Heaven and a Hell; nd if Heaven be not a ſufficient Encouragement to Charity, nor Hell ſufficient to deter us from Uncharitableneſs, it is to no purpoſe to uſe any other Arguments, which can never perſuade, if theſe can't; or if they could, would neither carry us to Heaven, nor keep us out of Hell; for to be charitable only for temporal reaſons, is to give our goods to feed the poor, without a true Divine Charity; which St. *Paul* tells us, will profit nothing, 1 *Cor.* 13. For ſuch a Charity as does not raiſe us above this world, can neither carry us to Heaven, nor keep us out of Hell. And therefore inſtead of drawing together all the Arguments for Charity which you have ſo often heard, and ſhewing them in a new dreſs, my deſign at preſent is to recommend to you a very excellent, but a very neglect-

neglected part of Charity, which our Saviour preſſes on us in my Text, *viz.* The Charity of Lending, *Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again.*

In ſpeaking to which Words, I ſhall 1. Shew you what this Duty is. 2. What an excellent Charity it is to lend. And how this may be improved to the moſt excellent purpoſes.

1. What this Duty is, or what our Saviour means by *lending, hoping for nothing again.* And it can ſignify but two things; and I ſee no reaſon to think, but that our Saviour might mean both. 1. To Lend, without hoping for any encreaſe; or to lend freely, without Uſury. 2. To lend, where the very Principal may be in danger, when we have little reaſon to hope that we ſhall ever ſee our own again.

1. To lend freely, without Uſury; for our Saviour commands this, as an Act of Charity, *Do good, and lend:* And though to lend, even upon Uſury, may in many caſes prove a great kindneſs to the Borrower, yet Charity

is

s not the motive of the Lender, it is ot Charity, but Traffick and Merhandize of Money: and though the *ews* were expreſly forbid to lend their Brethren upon Uſury, yet our Saviour intimates there was ſomething like his, and equivalent to it, which ſpoiled the Charity of lending, even without Uſury; that they would not lend to the poor; who though they ſhould repay them what they borrowed, yet were never likely to be in a condition to lend to them again; but they would lend to the Rich, from whom they expected the like returns of kindneſs; as you may ſee in the Verſes before my Text; 33, 34. *And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo do even the ſame. And if ye lend to them, of whom ye hope to receive,* (not only your own, but the like kindneſs of lending to you when your occaſions require it), *what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo lend to ſinners, to receive as much again*; τὰ ἴσα, equal returns of kindneſs; which if it be not Uſury of Money, is Uſury of Kindneſſes, but is not Charity; like inviting our Rich Friends and Neighbours to a Feaſt, who can invite us again; which

which though it be no fault, is no Charity, for that consists in entertaining the poor, who can make us no return, 14. *Luke* 12, 13, 14. And thus our Saviour exhorts us here, but *do you do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again*; neither for Usury, nor for such returns and exchanges of kindness.

It was for the sake of this Duty, that Usury was so strictly forbidden by the *Jewish* Law, that men might the more freely lend their Money to those who wanted, when they had no present use for it themselves; and had no way to encrease it; and as far as the Reason and Charity of this Law extends, so far it still obliges, and so far Usury is still forbid to Christians.

This is not well considered by those who so universally condemn all Usury; and because the right understanding of this will be of great use to settle some men's minds, and to explain and enforce this duty of Lending, which I now recommend to you, it cannot be thought a digression from my present Design, to give you the true, but short state of this matter.

It is confessed on all hands, That Usury is forbid by the Law of *Moses*; but

but the great miſtake is concerning the Nature of Uſury, or what that is which the Law forbids and condemns by the name of Uſury.

Some think that all Increaſe of Money, when men lend a Sum of Money to receive the Principal again with Intereſt, is the Uſury which the Law forbids; and therefore that this is abſolutely unlawful in all caſes, and in all degrees; though we all know, That Trade, to which we owe all the Riches and Greatneſs of our Nation, and ſo many excellent Charities too, cannot be maintained without it: That ſome men, who now live comfortably in the world, maintain their Families with Credit and Reputation, and do many acts of Charity themſelves, could not Trade at all; others could not drive ſuch flouriſhing and ſpreading Trades without borrowed Money, nor borrow without Intereſt: That many Widows and Orphans are maintained by Intereſt, who muſt in a few years be Beggars, had they no other way to live, but to ſpend the Principal. This is ſo contrary to the ſenſe and reaſon of Mankind, and to all the rules of Juſtice and Charity, and ſo im-

impracticable in the preſent ſtate of the world, that while it is poſſible to put any other ſenſe upon the Law, I would never think of this. And the comfort is, that the Law expounds it ſelf otherwiſe, and gives no colour for ſuch an Interpretation as this, That all Increaſe of Money is forbid by it.

For 1. The Law it ſelf allowed the *Jews* to take Uſury of Strangers of other Countries, though not of their Brethren, or natural *Jews*, 23. *Deut.* 20. *Unto a ſtranger thou mayeſt lend upon uſury, but unto thy brother thou ſhalt not lend upon uſury.* And therefore God did not abſolutely forbid the *Jews* to encreaſe their Money, for they might lend to ſtrangers upon Uſury; which proves, that this was not an univerſal Law to them, much leſs is it ſo to all mankind. And that proves that there is no moral and intrinſick evil in Uſury; for if all Uſury had in its own nature been unlawful, God could not have allowed the *Jews* to take Uſury of ſtrangers; for he cannot allow the leaſt moral evil. The truth is, I never could yet ſee the leaſt ſhadow of an Argument to prove, that Uſury is evil in its nature, unleſs that Money

cant

n't beget Money, be thought an Ar-
ument; but that is as good an Argu-
ent againſt buying Corn or Wine, or
y thing elſe with Money; for it is
nnatural for Money to beget Corn or
ine: But if the barren nature of
oney, that it cannot naturally pro-
agate it ſelf, be a reaſon againſt Uſu-
of Money, this is no reaſon againſt
ſury of Corn, which is equally for-
d: for it is natural for Corn to pro-
agate its kind, and multiply it ſelf;
d yet the Uſury of all Victuals is
much forbid, as the Uſury of Mo-
y, 23. *Deut.* 19. Now if Uſury be
t morally evil, it can be unlawful
none, but thoſe to whom God has
rbid it; and there being no prohibi-
on of it in the New Teſtament, which
the Law of the Chriſtian Church, it
annot be unlawful to Chriſtians,
hatever it was to the *Jews*.

2. And yet the *Jews* themſelves were
t expreſly forbid, however they
ight underſtand it, to lend their
oney upon Uſury, to all their own
rethren, but only to the Poor: So
at had any Rich *Jew* come to bor-
w Money of them, for any thing
at appears by the Law, they might

have lent Money to him upon Usury. This Observation will clear this whole matter; and therefore I shall turn you to all the Texts of the Law, which forbid Usury, and the reading of them will convince you, That Usury was forbid only in favour of the Poor.

The first Text is, 22. Exod. 25. *If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an Usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him Usury*: Where no Usury is forbid, but only lending to the Poor upon Usury: Thus 25. *Lev.* 35, 36, 37. *And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen to decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him.----Take thou no usury of him, nor increase, but fear God, that thy brother may live well with thee: Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.* It is true, in the Repetition of this Law, 23. *Deut.* 19, 20. it is only said, *Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother, usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou setteſt thine hand unto,*

o, in the land whither thou goeſt to poſ-eſs. This ſeems to forbid lending upon Uſury to any *Jew*, whether Rich or Poor: but this being only a repetition of thoſe Laws in *Exodus* and *Leviticus*, in all reaſon muſt be expounded by them; and though the Poor are not expreſſed, the Circumſtances of the place prove, that they only are meant; for though Rich Men may ſometimes have occaſion to borrow Money, yet none but the Poor, who have no Money to buy, can ever have occaſion to borrow Victuals upon Uſury; and the difference the Law makes between a Brother and a Stranger ſhews, that it is intended as an Act of Charity, which they owe to their Brethren, though not to ſtrangers. For which Reaſon alſo they were forbid to make any of their Brethren Bond-men, though they might buy the Children of the Heathen and Strangers for Bond-men and Bond-maids, 25. *Levit.* 39, *&c.* and the Bleſſing God promiſes ſhews, that it is the Reward of Charity.

In other places, where Uſury is mentioned, ſome Circumſtance or other determines it to the Poor. This was the

eaſe, when *Nehemiah* reproved the Nobles and the Rulers for exacting Uſury, 5. *Nehem.* When the Prophet *Iſaiah* threatens great Deſolations againſt the Land, he thus deſcribes it, *And it ſhall be as with the people, ſo with the prieſt ---- as with the lender, ſo with the borrower, as with the taker of uſury, ſo with the giver of uſury to him*, 24. Iſa. 2. That is, the Lender and the Uſurer ſhall be reduced to the ſame Diſtreſs and Poverty, as thoſe ſuffer who borrow upon Uſury; which ſhews, that none but Poor Men uſed to borrow upon Uſury in thoſe days. Thus when the Prophet *Jeremiah* complains, *Woe is me, my Mother, that thou haſt born me a man of ſtrife, and a man of contention to the whole earth: I have neither lent on uſury, nor men have lent to me on uſury, yet every one of them doth curſe me*, 15. Jer. 10. it plainly intimates, that Uſury is ſuch an Oppreſſion of the Poor, as both deſerves and very often procures Curſes. And therefore the Prophet *Ezekiel* joyns Uſury with the Oppreſſion of the Poor, and other Acts of Violence, 18. *Ezek.* 7, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17. *He who hath oppreſſed the poor and needy, hath ſpoiled by violence, hath*

hath not reſtored the pledge, hath given forth upon uſury, and hath taken Increaſe, he ſhall die. But he that hath neither oppreſſed the poor, nor hath with-holden the pledge, neither hath ſpoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and cloathed the naked with a garment, that hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received uſury nor increaſe, he ſhall live. Which makes it very plain, what is meant by Uſury, when to take Uſury, is joyned with Violence and Oppreſſion of the Poor; and to lend without Uſury is reckoned among Acts of great Charity and Goodneſs.

There is but one place more, as I remember, that mentions Uſury, 15. *Pſalm* 5. and there putting forth Money to Uſury is joyned with taking a Reward againſt the Innocent, which ſhews, that it was an Act of Violence and Oppreſſion. For indeed among the *Jews*, who were no Merchants, nor maintained any Foreign Trade with other Nations, no men had occaſion to borrow Money, much leſs Victuals, but to ſupply their preſent wants, and to take advantage of the Neceſſities of the Poor, to increaſe their own For-

tunes by encreasing their Poverty, was against all the Laws of Goodness and Charity; and therefore this Usury, which was the only Usury known in those days, is strictly forbid, as all other Acts of Oppression are. All other kinds of Usury are introduced by Trade and Commerce; and though it is against Charity to lend upon Usury to men, who borrow to supply their wants, yet if men borrow to increase their Trade and Fortunes, there is Justice and Equity in it, that the Lender shall make some Increase of his Money, as well as the Borrower. This is not properly Usury, but Traffick and Commerce; and I know no reason, why Men may not Trade with Money, as well as with other Commodities.

And this I take to be the true reason, why the *Jews* were permitted to take Usury of Strangers, but not of their Brethren, because their Heathen Neighbours were Merchants, as is plain of *Tyre* and *Zidon*, 23. *Isai.* They improved their Money by Trade, and therefore it was fit they should pay Interest for it; especially if they were to lend upon Usury only to such Strangers as came among them for Trade,

but

but did not dwell and ſojourn with them; which ſeems probable from 25. *Levit.* 35. where the Stranger that ſojourns with them ſeems to be entituled to the like Charity as a Brother. *If thy Brother be waxen poor, and fallen to decay, thou ſhalt relieve him, yea, though he be a ſtranger, or a ſojourner, that he may live with thee, take thou no uſury of him, nor Increaſe.* For a *Stranger* never ſignifies a Proſelyte of Juſtice, who by Circumciſion was incorporated into the Body of *Iſrael*, made a Brother, and entituled to the Privileges of a Natural *Jew*, but only a Proſelyte of the Gate, who renounced Idolatry, but did not undertake the Obſervation of the Law of *Moſes*; and yet they were not to take Uſury of theſe Strangers if they were poor, no more than of their Brother, according to that Law, 22. *Exod.* 21. *Thou ſhalt not vex a ſtranger, nor oppreſs him, for ye were ſtrangers in the land of Egypt.*

The Anſwer our Saviour gives to the Servant who hid his Talent in the Napkin, ſeems to juſtify this Account, unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that his Lord would have been pleaſed with unjuſt and wicked Gain. 25. Matth. 27.

Thou oughtest to have put my money to the Exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. So that though it was unlawful to lend Money upon Usury to the Poor, it was not so to the Exchangers, who traded in Money. And our Saviour's driving the Money-Changers out of the Temple, no more proves that he disallowed that Profession, than that he disallowed selling Oxen, and Sheep, and Doves for Sacrifice, for he drove them out also; the Fault was not in the Merchandise no more of Money, than of Sheep, or Oxen, or Doves, but they made *his Father's house, a house of Merchandize*, 2. John 14, 15, &c.

It is certain the ancient Fathers, who were professed Eenemies to Usury, opposed it under this Notion; for their great Arguments against Usury, are levelled against Uncharitableness and Oppression of the Poor, as appears from *Gregor. Nyssen*, St. *Ambrose*, St. *Basil*, and others; and yet it is no wonder, should we meet with some Passages in them against Usury considered as Trading and Merchandise of Money: For it is well known, that they

were

were not much greater Friends to Trade and Merchandiſe, than they were to Uſury, which they thought unbecoming a Chriſtian, as miniſtring only to Covetouſneſs and Luxury. And yet I ſuppoſe, the greateſt Enemies at this day to Uſury, will not carry the Quarrel ſo far, as to condemn Merchandiſe. And yet under this Notion of Covetouſneſs and ſordid Gain (which is equally applicable to all Trade) Uſury is forbid the Clergy by the Seventeenth Cannon of the Firſt Council of *Nice*; but no Council ever forbad it to the Layety, or threatened Church-Cenſures againſt them for it, which they would certainly have done, had they thought it evil in its ſelf.

This may ſatisfy us in what Sence Uſury is forbid, both by the Law of *Moſes* and the ancient Writers of the Chriſtian Church, *viz.* as contrary to Charity; when we lend upon Uſury, where Charity requires us to lend freely: When we take Increaſe of the Poor, who borrow to ſupply their Wants, and ſink them ſtill more irrecoverably into Poverty by ſuch Exactions: This always was, and always will be hateful to God, and to all Good Men, and

and yet ſuch deteſtable Uſurers there are among us, who grow rich upon the Ruins and Spoils of the Poor, and drink the Tears of Widows and Orphans; but when to lend without Uſury is no Charity, and to take Uſury is no Oppreſſion, there Uſury it ſelf is no Crime.

And hence we learn (which is the great thing I aimed at.) that Uſury was forbid only for the ſake of Lending, which proves, that to lend freely to the Poor, is a great and neceſſary Act of Charity: Though a Man never took a Penny for Uſury in his Life, yet if he neither gives, nor lends to the Poor, he is guilty of all that Uncharitableneſs, for which Uſury is condemned; nay in moſt Caſes, even theſe worſt ſort of Uſurers are the more charitable Men: For excepting ſome very hard Caſes, it is greater Charity to lend even to the Poor for Uſury, than not to lend at all.

For this Reaſon the Emperor *Leo* was forced by a New Conſtitution to permit Uſury, which his Father out of a pious Zeal had wholly forbid, becauſe he found, that when Men were forbid to take any Uſury, they would not

ot lend at all, which was a greater ardſhip to the Poor, than Uſury it lf.

Meerly not to take Uſury is no Virue; but to lend to the Poor without Uſury is. To lock up our Money in ur Cheſts to ruſt and canker, and to o no good with it, is what St. *James* o ſeverely threatens rich Men for, *Go ow ye rich men, weep and howl for your niſeries, which ſhall come upon you; your iches are corrupted, and your garments re moth-eaten; your gold and your ſilver s cankered, and the ruſt of them ſhall be witneſs againſt you,* a Witneſs of your Covetouſneſs and Uncharitableneſs, that you have done no good with it, but hoarded it up to ruſt and canker for want of uſe. 5. *James* 1, 2, 3.

This Controverſy then may be ſtated and decided in a few words. Uſury is a very great Sin, that is, to lend our Money upon Uſury to thoſe who borrow for Neceſſity and Want, and to exact ſuch Payments with Rigour and Severity, to ſtrip ſuch miſerable People of that little that remains, to impriſon their Perſons, and make them end their Lives in a Goal. To lock up our Money, and do no good with it,

it, is to hide our Talent in a Na kin; for Money is improvable, a must be improved, either for Chari or Increaſe, to be a new and perpetu Spring of Charity. To declaim a gainſt Uſury, and not to exhort men t lend to the Poor without Uſury, is to mi ſtake or overlook the true End and De ſign of the Law, and to betray uncha ritable Men to a greater Evil than Uſu ry it ſelf; but if men lend freely to th Poor in ſuch Proportions as Charit requires, they may very innocently and virtuouſly, without tranſgreſſing this Law againſt Uſury, lend their Mo ney for Increaſe to the Rich.

2. But our Saviour ſeems to mean ſomething more by *lending*, *hoping for no thing again*, not only to lend freely without Uſury, but to lend, where the Principal may be in Danger, when we cannot reaſonably promiſe our ſelves to receive our own again: no man can deny, but this is great Charity; but then this muſt be conducted by the meaſures and proportions of giving: what Charity will oblige us to give, it will as reaſonably oblige us to lend; but where the Retu n is very hazardous, it can oblige us to lend, no more

e than what it would become us to
e, and yet in ſuch Caſes, lending
y be a greater Charity than giving,
ich is the Second thing propoſed,
ich I can ſpeak but briefly to.

2. The Excellency and Advanta-
s of this Charity of Lending, and
w it may be improved to be the beſt
rpoſe.

Now if we compare Giving and
nding together, Lending has much
e Advantage of Giving, as to
e true End and Purpoſes of Cha-
y.

To lend is a greater Obligation to
duſtry, than to give; and there can-
ot be a greater Kindneſs done to the
oor, next to keeping them from ſtar-
ing, than to teach them Induſtry. I
eed not tell you, that there are many
oor, who will never work, while they
an meet with charitable People to
ive; nay, who chuſe to be ſick, to
e lame, to be blind, to move Chari-
y, rather than work to ſupply their
Wants; but when Men have nothing
o live on, but the improvement of

lent

lent Money, which they know they must repay when it is called for, this must make them industrious; for it both encourages their Industry, and keeps the Rod over them; especially were this made a standing Rule to give nothing to those who are able, but will not work, who have a Stock lent them to trade with, and neglect to improve it.

Thus what we give does but one single Act of Charity, for we can give it but once; but what we lend may circulate, as the Blood does in our Veins, and communicate Warmth and Spirits to more parts of the Body than one: that is, what we lend, may be lent again, and do a great many successive Charities, as great, or greater than that one single Charity had been, if we had given it: And that certainly is one of the greatest and noblest Charities which is most diffusive.

But yet to make this Charity of Lending the more effectual, it must be confessed, that a Publick Bank of Charity raised out of such free Loans, will have many Advantages above any Private

Private Acts of this Nature; and I can by no means think this either impracticable or difficult.

I doubt not but moſt of this Honourable Aſſembly could contrive very Advantageous ways of doing this, were Men but Charitably diſpoſed. For ſuppoſe you ſhould make your Hoſpitals, or your Companies, ſuch Publick Banks, or if it could be more Publick, ſtill the more Uſeful, and the more ſecure, where charitable People may ſafely depoſite their Money without Uſe, or thoſe who cannot ſpare the whole Intereſt, may abate ſome part of it; and where the running Caſh may be lodged, which Men expect no Intereſt for; this might eaſily riſe to a very vaſt Sum, which with wiſe Improvement would make a ſure and laſting Fund of Charity.

And could any thing in the World be more eaſie than this, which no man could feel? What would it be to a Rich Man, who has many thouſands employed in Trade, or ſecured at Intereſt; or if he knows when he has enough, has no need to increaſe it, to drop

drop ſome thouſands into ſuch a free Bank, to ſanctify and proſper his Trade, and other ways of Gain, and to ſecure a Bleſſing to his Poſterity? How may others are there, who could ſpare a hundred, or it may be ſome hundred pounds out of their Stock, and not feel the want of Intereſt, or at leaſt, if they could not ſpare the whole Intereſt, might ſpare the half, or third part of it? How many are there, who have ſome hundreds by them uſeleſs, which they would not, and could not with any reaſon grudge to lay up in a ſafe Bank? How many are there, who would eaſily be perſwaded to lend, were there ſuch a ſafe Bank to receive it, who are very unwilling to give? And were there ſuch a Bank of Charity once ſetled, there would be very little need of giving.

For I know not any kind of Charity, but might be provided for in this way, were men but free and liberal in lending. It would enlarge your Hoſpitals, clear your Streets of Beggars, the great Reproach of this City; maintain thoſe who can't work, and employ

ploy thoſe who can; put poor Children to Apprentice, provide Stocks for ingenious and Induſtrious Young Men, who want them; redeem Priſoners, and, which Juſtice and Honour requires of you, as far as poſſibly you can, may in ſome meaſure provide a Fund for your Orphans.

This would advance the Glory of this great City, it would perpetuate and conſecrate the Memory of ſuch worthy Perſons, as would begin and promote ſuch a laſting and extenſive Charity; the Children which are unborn, would riſe up and call them bleſſed; it would draw a great ſhare of the Charitable Money of the Nation into your hands, which would quicken Trade, and encreaſe your Riches; and above all, it would procure all the great Rewards which are promiſed to Charity, both in this World, and in the Next.

But whatever becomes of this Propoſal, you muſt always remember, that it is great Charity to lend as well as to give: This is what our Saviour expects from us, this is what he Commands, *To do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again*; and if out of a greedy

desire of gain, we will lend nothing freely to the Relief and Encouragement of the Industrious Poor, this will make all our other Usury and Increase, which is Lawful and Innocent in it self, when it neither Oppresses the Poor, nor stops our Charity, to become sin.

SER-

SERMON VI.

reach'd before the Queen at *Whitehall, June* 26. 1692.

Prov. XVIII. 14.

The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtain his infirmity: but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?

ONE great Objection againſt Providence, is taken from the many Evils and Calamities which mankind ſuffer; which would be a reaſonable Objection, were they more than are deſerved, or more than are neceſſary for the wiſe Government of the world. But beſides other Anſwers that may be given to it, the Wiſe-man's Obſervation in my Text furniſhes us with Two very plain Anſwers. 1. That the Sufferings of this life are not diſproportioned to our ſtrength to bear them; and when Afflictions and Misfortunes are neceſſary

to the wise government of the world, it is a sufficient vindication of Providence, that God lays no more on us, than what the spirit of a man can bear; *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities.* And 2*dly*, That the only Evils that are intolerable and insupportable, are wholly owing to our selves; and then we have no reason to quarrel at the Divine Providence, when God is more merciful to us than we are to our selves. *But a wounded spirit who can bear?*

For the Explication and Improvement of these Words, I shall 1. Enquire what is meant by sustaining Infirmities. 2. By what means the spirit of a man can sustain his Infirmities. 3. What is meant by a Wounded Spirit. 4. How unsupportable a Wounded Spirit is. 5. Conclude with some Practical Inferences from the whole.

1. What is meant by *sustaining Infirmities*: Now *Infirmities* in this place being opposed to a *Wounded Spirit*, must signify only external sufferings, whatever is grievous and afflicting, excepting the disorders and troubles of our own minds. And by sustaining

Infir-

nfirmities is not meant, that we must not feel them, nor have any afflicting ense of them; for the Stoicks themselves would not say, that pain was not pain; for then there would be no need of Patience to bear it; but that Patience, if there be any such thing, can conquer pain. And herefore to sustain Infirmities, is to feel, but not to sink under the weight of them; as that man sustains his burden, who can go upright, and not stagger, at least not fall, though he feels the weight of it on his shoulders: That is, he who can in any measure enjoy himself under suffering, does so far sustain it; and the more perfectly we can enjoy our selves, though the brightness and gaiety of our Spirits may be a little sullied and overcast, the more compleat and perfect is our Conquest over all the Calamities of Life.

Non ego colorem, dolorem esse nego, cur enim fortitudo desid raretur, sed eum opprimi dico patientia, si modo est aliqua patientia. Cicer.

2*dly*, But the great Enquiry is, How the spirit of a man can sustain his Infirmities? And that is done Three ways: 1. By Natural Courage, and Strength of Mind. 2. By the Powers

of Reaſon. 3. By the Diviner Aids and Succours of Religion.

1. Natural Courage, and Strength of Mind: A man of Spirit thinks it a reproach to be eaſily diſturbed and ruffled, to be put out of humour by every accident, to ſink under the common Calamities of life; nay, to be wholly maſtered by the moſt extraordinary and formidable Events. There is an inbred Greatneſs in human Nature, which does not care to confeſs its own weakneſs, which will not yield, or ſubmit, or own a Conqueſt; an untaught Courage, which ſupports the rude and illiterate part of mankind, even without Reaſon and Diſcourſe; which is improved by a ſenſe of Honour in men of Fortune, increaſes by exerciſe and diſcipline, by hard labour, and difficult trials, and is loſt by eaſe, and luxury, and ſoftneſs, which makes the Mind as tender as the Body, to feel all the Viciſſitudes of Fortune, as a crazy and diſtempered body does the change of Weather. God has put a ſpirit into man, which can bear his Infirmity; and if we have it not, it is our own fault.

2dly,

2*dly*, The spirit of a man sustains his Infirmities by the Power of Reason, which adds to our Natural Courage, gives us a more confirmed sense of Decency and Honour, teaches us the true value of things, quiets our Passions, undeceives our abused Imaginations, convinces us that some fancied evils are none at all, others not so great as we thought, and that the worst condition has its allays, which make it tolerable to a Wise and Good man.

I am far from thinking, That the mere Power of Natural Reason, and Moral Arguments, is able to support us under all events, much less, that the Arguments of the Heathen Philosophers, though they said a great many wise and good things, were sufficient to this purpose; but yet it is certain, That Reason is the strength of the Mind, and it is the Mind which must bear up under external Sufferings; and it is as certain, that Nature furnishes us with a great many Arguments to bear them easily without fainting: As for Instance:

We must consider the state of the World, which is in a continual flux and motion, and does not long shew

the ſame face of things; that the various Luſts and Paſſions of men among whom we live, will create a great deal of trouble to us; and that our mortal bodies are liable to pain and hunger, and many Calamities. This is the ſtate of all mankind in this world; and if after all, it be deſirable to live, to come into, and to continue in this world, upon theſe terms, we muſt make the beſt of our condition, and bear our ſufferings patiently, and not repine, if we eſcape as well as the generality of Mankind: In ſuch a ſtate of life we muſt not promiſe to our ſelves a compleat and undiſturbed Happineſs; for then we muſt be diſappointed, and be very uneaſy and impatient at ſuch a diſappointment; but we muſt expect to ſuffer more or leſs, and that will make us think we eſcape well, when our Sufferings are but light; and teach us to arm our ſelves againſt thoſe which are greater, with courage and patience.

Thus a Wiſe man ſees through the frightful or flattering Diſguiſes of things, and judges by Nature, not by Fancy and Opinion; and then he finds no mighty reaſon to be diſturbed about many

many things, which are judged and resented as great Calamities by unthinking Men. Reason teaches them, that Nature is contented with a little, and that poor men enjoy themselves, and have their Pleasures and Satisfactions, as well as the Rich; and therefore Poverty without pressing Wants, is not so great an Evil, as it is thought by some men; and then it can be no intolerable Evil neither, to fall from a high and prosperous Fortune to a meaner State. Reason teaches them, that a good man, who is conscious to himself of his own Virtue and Integrity, ought not to be concerned for unjust Reproaches, which are the effects of Ignorance or Malice. That undeserved Honours, unjust Praises and Commendations, are only the Entertainments of Fools; and that unjust Reproaches ought not to put Wise men out of countenance. And thus it is in other Cases; There is a vast difference between the natures of things, and mens Opinions; and were our Passions and Resentments governed by Reason, and proportioned to the nature of things, not to the Opinions of men about them, it would make our Con-

Condition in this World much more eaſy and tolerable. But I cannot now particularly ſhew you all the variety of Arguments, whereby men may ſupport themſelves under ſeveral Calamities of Life; it is ſufficient to my preſent purpoſe, that Reaſon gives a new ſtrength and vigour to the ſpirit of a man to ſuſtain his Infirmities.

Thirdly, But the greateſt Supports of all, are the Arguments Religion furniſhes us with; as to name but two at preſent. 1. That whatever we ſuffer, is not the effect of a blind Chance, or fatal Neceſſity, but is ordered by a Wiſe and Good Providence. 2. That if we bear our preſent Sufferings with patience and ſubmiſſion to the Will of God, and make a wiſe uſe of them to our improvement in Grace and Virtue, our very ſufferings ſhall be greatly rewarded in the next World. Theſe two Principles are the Foundations of all Religion, and as certain as any thing in Religion; all other Arguments without this belief, cannot ſupport us, and there are no Sufferings too great for a man to bear, who is throughly poſſeſſed with a firm belief and vigorous ſenſe of theſe.

Can

Can we our selves, or the kindest friend in the World, chuse better for us than God? Do we suspect his Wisdom, or his Goodness? Can he mistake our Condition, who knows our Frame? Can he be wanting in his care of us, or in good will to us, who made us? What is it we desire, but to be happy? and if God intends our happiness in his severest Corrections, why should we complain? Religion teaches us, that the care of our Souls is of much greater concernment to us than bodily Ease or Pleasure; and if God sees Pain and Sickness, Poverty and Disgrace, necessary to cure, or restrain our vicious and distempered Passions, or to improve and exercise our Graces, have we any reason to complain that God takes such severe methods to save our Souls? Had we rather be miserable for ever, than suffer some present want and pain? The Soul is the best part of Man; and to take care of a man, is to improve his better Part; and this is the Design of God's Providence towards particular men, to train them up to Virtue by such methods of Kindness or Severity, as he sees them want.

This

This I confeſs may be very grievous and afflicting at preſent, but then we have the hopes of Immortal Life to ſupport us; and can that man be miſerable, can he ſink under preſent Sufferings, who has the hope of Immortal Life, *as the Anchor of the Soul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt?* To believe that all things at preſent are intended for our good, and *ſhall work together for our good, if we love God*; and that when we have out-rid the Storms of this World, by Faith, and Patience, and Hope, *Theſe light afflictions, which are but for a moment, ſhall work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. This, if any thing, will make all the Sufferings of this Life eaſie: if natural Courage, or natural Reaſon fail, the Spirit of a man, ſupported by Religion, will ſuſtain his Infirmity.

Thirdly, Let us now conſider what is meant by *a wounded Spirit*: This is a metaphorical Expreſſion, and ſignifies a Spirit which ſuffers pain and trouble. A wound in the Body, is a Diviſion of one part from another, which is always painful; and though a Spirit cannot be thus divided, yet becauſe a Wound cauſes Pain; a Spirit which

is

is diſordered, and ſuffers pain, is ſaid to be wounded: As for inſtance,

Some mens Spirits are wounded with the diſorders and violence of their own Paſſions; they love, or hope, or fear, or deſire, or grieve immoderately; and all Paſſions are very painful, when they are in exceſs. Upon this account the Wicked are ſaid *to be like a troubled ſea when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt: there is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.*

Other mens Spirits are wounded with a ſenſe of Guilt; their own Conſciences reproach and ſhame them, and threaten the Vengeance of God againſt them; they have gratified their Luſt, or Revenge, their Ambition, or Covetouſneſs; and dreamt of nothing but eaſe and pleaſure; the Temptation was very charming as it came towards them, but now the heat and impetus is allay'd, and the enjoyment over, they can't review what they have done, without horror; their affrighted Conſciences draw the moſt amazing ſcenes of Judgment, and paint their Fancies with all the blackeſt Images of Terror; *The Sinners of Sion are afraid, fear hath ſurpriz'd the Hypocrites. Who ſhall dwell*

with

with devouring fire? who ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?

4*thly*, This is the wounded Spirit, and ſuch a *wounded Spirit who can bear?* This is Matter of Senſe, and therefore for the Proof of it, we muſt appeal to the Senſe of Mankind; and there is no danger in this Appeal; for though ſome Men may ſcorn to confeſs, what they feel, yet if all Mens Minds be of a make, we can feel in our ſelves, what other Men feel: And then we all know, that Anger when it grows immoderate, and encreaſes into Rage and Fury, worries the Mind, and ſharpens it ſelf into ſuch a keeneſs, as cuts deep into our own Souls; that an immoderate love of Riches, or Honours, or Pleaſures creates us infinite Trouble, torments with an impatient Thirſt, with reſtleſs and uneaſy Expectations, diſtracts us between Hopes and Fears, kills with Delays and Diſappointments; and there are but few Men, who can long diſſemble their inward pain and uneaſineſs, but confeſs it in their Looks, and Words, and Behaviour, by external and viſible Symptoms of Frenzy and Diſtraction.

And yet all this is nothing to the Agonies

gonies of a guilty Mind, as any Man muſt confeſs who knows what it is to be Self-condemned, and to live under the Apprehenſions of God's Wrath, and the terrible Expectations of endleſs Torments; for with what Courage and Patience can any Man bear ſuch a Thought as this, That he muſt be miſerable for ever? Some Men may laugh away the Thoughts of Hell, but it is certain, that no Man who believes in good earneſt, that there is a Hell, and that he himſelf is in the moſt apparent danger of falling into it, can bear this Thought: The many ſad Examples of deſpairing Sinners, who at the laſt moment groan out their Souls in Agonies and Horrors, are an undeniable Proof of this. Men who do not believe a Hell, may laugh at it, till they feel it; but for experiments ſake let them only ſuppoſe that there were a Hell, and that Hell were to be their Portion, and then let them tell me, how they can bear ſuch a Thought.

This is ſufficient to ſatisfy us, how unſupportable a wounded Spirit is; but to give us a deeper and more laſting Senſe of it, I ſhall further obſerve, that a wounded Spirit has no refuge or retreat,

retreat, has nothing left to ſupport it ſelf with. The Spirit of a Man can bear his Infirmities, but when the Spirit it ſelf is wounded, there is nothing to ſupport that; this wounds our Courage, our Reaſon, makes all external Comforts taſtleſs, and deprives us of all the Comforts of Religion.

For 1*ſt*. What Courage can any Man have againſt Himſelf, againſt the Wounds and Diſorders of his own Mind? Courage is nothing elſe, but a firmneſs of Mind to govern its own Reſentments and Paſſions; to ſuffer Pain, and Reproach, and other Evils without immoderate Grief, and to encounter dangers without an amazing fear; but when the Mind it ſelf is oppreſſed with Grief, and Fears and Cares, the Diſeaſe which Courage ſhould prevent, has already ſeized the Spirits. Courage fortifies us againſt external Evils, to keep them at a diſtance from wounding our Spirits; but the Diſorders of our own Paſſions are inward Wounds, which we muſt feel and languiſh under. When our own Conſciences reproach, chide, and threaten us, the good Opinion and Courtſhips of the World cannot defend us from our ſelves,

lves, we cannot ſtop our ears againſt
we cannot harden our ſelves againſt
s Terrors, it is a domeſtick Fury,
hich when it is provoked and awaken-
, will be heard, and will make us
emble, will make us judge and con-
mn our ſelves, and begin our own
orments in frightful Horrors and Ago-
es of Mind.

2*dly*, Whereas Reaſon can fortify the
ind againſt all external Calamities,
hen our Spirits are wounded, that
tle Reaſon we have left proves our
ormentor. When we are under the
ranſports of violent and diſorderly
aſſions, Reaſon can't be heard, or is
ribed by Paſſion to juſtify its own Ex-
eſſes. Wiſe Counſels are loſt on ſuch
en, as much as a Lecture of Philo-
phy would be in the Noiſe and Di-
raction of an Alarm or Battel.

What a ſullen and obſtinate thing is
rief! how does it pore on its own
iſfortune, nouriſh its Diſeaſe, and
eſpiſe all Arts of Diverſion, that it is
ommonly above the cure of any thing
ut Time, which weakens the Impreſ-
on, or tires men with their own Com-
laints!

When our Conſciences are wounded

with Guilt, this arms all the Reaſon we have againſt us, for Reaſon in ſuch Caſes can never be on our ſide; then Reaſon diſcovers our Shame and Danger, aggravates our Sins, and many times drives ſuch awaken'd Sinners into the very Horrors of Diſpair, diſputes againſt the poſſibility of their Pardon, and blots their Names out of all the Promiſes of the Goſpel, how large and univerſal ſoever they be. The Guides of Souls, who are always conſulted upon ſuch Occaſions, (how much ſoever they are deſpiſed at other times) could tell a great many ſad Stories of this kind, enow to convince Sinners, that even Wit and Reaſon is a very dangerous Enemy, when a guilty Conſcience turns the edge of it againſt ourſelves.

3*dly*, When there is no Eaſe and Comfort within, there is no other Remedy, but to ſeek for Support and Comfort from abroad; and there are a great many pretty Diverſions in the World to entertain Men, who are at leiſure to attend them, but theſe are no Entertainments to a wounded Spirit. When men are galled by their own Paſſions, by Fear, Emulation, Jealouſy, Diſcon-

content, in the *very midst of laughter* heart is sorrowful. As great as *Ha-* was, all his Riches and Power ailed him nothing, while he saw *ordecai* the *Jew* sitting at the King's ate, 5. *Esth.*13.

The good things of this World are ry considerable, when there is an ea- and cheerful mind to enjoy them; t they cannot make a man easy and ppy, whose Mind is disturbed; they ay entertain an easy Mind, but can- t quiet the Tumults and Disorders of ssions, nor give any Ease to a wound- Spirit.

Much less can external things ap- ease the Horrors of a guilty Consci- nce. Away all ye vain Delights, will ch a man say, what have I to do with easure, when Torments, everlasting orments, must be my Portion? Why you tell me of Riches and Honours, hen the great God is my Enemy, hen I am despised and abhorred of my aker, and am thought worthy of no etter Portion than Eternal Flames? am not at leisure to attend the Flat- ering Courtships of this World; my houghts are taken up with a more readful Prospect of things to come.

O Eternity! Eternity! the never-dying Worm, the never-dying Death!

4*thly*, Nor can a wounded Spirit find any Support from the Considerations of Religion, unleſs it find its Cure there. If the Belief of a Divine Providence and another World can cure our Love to preſent things, it will give us quiet and eaſy Paſſions too; but without this a wounded and diſtempered Spirit will reproach God as well as Men, and rage againſt Heaven it ſelf like that wicked King, *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait on the Lord any longer?* As *Solomon* obſerves, *The fooliſhneſs of Man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth againſt the Lord.*

If the Fear of God, and of thoſe Puniſhments He has threatned againſt Sin, makes us true and ſincere Penitents, conquers our vicious Habits, and reforms our Lives, this is ſuch a wounded Spirit, as God will bind up again, ſuch *a broken and contrite heart as God will not deſpiſe*; but the Thoughts of God and of a future Judgment, are very terrible to Impenitent Sinners. It is a dreadful Proſpect to look into the other World, and to ſee thoſe Lakes of Fire and Brimſtone, *prepared*

for

the Devil and his Angels. And this all that Bad men can ſee in the next World.

Thus we ſee how ſupportable all external Evils and Calamities are, how unſupportable a wounded Spirit is; and the comparing theſe two Caſes will ſuggeſt ſome very uſeful Thoughts to us.

As, *Firſt*, This is a great Vindication of the Providence of God, with reſpect to thoſe Evils and Calamities that are in the World. Sufferings are very neceſſary in this corrupt and degenerate State of Mankind; but though God ſees it neceſſary to puniſh Sinners, yet he has made abundant Proviſion to ſupport us under all external Sufferings: He inflicts nothing on us, but what the Spirit of a Man can ſuſtain, and ſupport it ſelf under; but our greateſt Sufferings are owing to our ſelves, and no more chargeable on the Providence of God, than our Sins are. Nothing that is external can hurt us, while our minds are ſound and healthful; but it is only a diſordered or guilty Mind which gives a Sting to Afflictions: God corrects in meaſure, as we are able to bear; but we our ſelves tye

the Knots, or add the Scorpions to the Scourge.

Secondly, This greatly recommends the Divine Wisdom, in that Provision God has made for our Support under Sufferings.

As, 1st, Since the generality of Mankind were not likely to prove any great Philosophers, *GOD* hath bestowed on them such a measure of Natural Courage, as will bear Afflictions better than the Reason and Philosophy of more thinking men; and we may generally observe, that those who make the least use of their Reason, and have the least share of External Comforts, have the greatest Portion of this untaught Courage, because they need it most.

2. God has provided the greatest Supports for the best men. Those who use their Reason, and examine the nature of things, will more easily bear Poverty, and Disgrace, and such other Evils, than men who judge by Opinion and popular Mistakes.

Those who live by Reason, and govern their sensual Appetites and Inclinations, and use the things of this World, so as not to be mastered by them,

them, retain that Courage and Strength of Mind, which is loſt by ſoftneſs and Effeminacy.

But a truly devout man, who believes the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of Providence, and the Rewards of the next Life, has the greateſt Support of all. Whereas an impenitent Sinner, who wounds his Conſcience with Guilt, and an Atheiſt, who believes neither a God nor a Providence, have nothing but Sottiſhneſs and Stupidity to ſupport them; and could things be better ordered for the encouragement of Virtue and Religion? Good men, whatever their Condition be, have the Advantage of the Wicked, even as to this preſent Life; they may be eaſy, and enjoy themſelves in all Conditions, for *GOD* has provided for their preſent Support; but if bad men be Sufferers, they have nothing to ſupport them; and though they be proſperous, they feel ſuch Diſorders of Paſſions, or ſuch guilty Fears, as ſowre all their other Enjoyments.

3. God has ſo wiſely ordered things, that we cannot ſupport our ſelves under Sufferings without making a wiſe and good uſe of them; for the beſt

Arguments to comfort us under Sufferings, will afford us no comfort unless they make us better. It is a great comfort that Afflictions are appointed by a wise and good God: But he who considers this, will naturally enquire into the Reason, why God strikes, *will search and try his way, and turn unto the Lord; will hear the rod, and who it is that hath appointed it.*

That Afflictions are ordered for our good, will make us endeavour to reap the Spiritual Benefit of them: for that Afflictions are useful, is no Comfort at all, unless we make a wise use of them; unless they bring forth the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness.

No Man can take Comfort in the Rewards of the next World, without bearing his Sufferings well in this; for our Sufferings will have no reward, unless they make us better; unless they purify our Minds, and exercise our Faith and Patience and Submission to the Will of God.

3*dly*, I observe, That it is better to suffer than to sin even with respect to our present ease, because Sufferings may be born by an innocent and vertuous Mind, but Guilt inflicts an unsup-

upportable wound upon the Spirit; and hose Sufferings which the Spirit of a Man can bear, are rather to be chosen, han what the Spirit of a Man cannot ear.

Lastly, I observe, That the Government of our own Passions contributes nore to our Happiness than any exterial Enjoyments. While our Minds are disordered with violent and tumultuous Passions, we can never be Easy and Happy, whatever else we enjoy: for this gives such a Wound to the Spirits, as no external Enjoyments can heal. But he who has his Passions under government, who knows how to Love and Fear, Desire and Hope, though he may be a great Sufferer, can never be miserable, because he can support himself under all other Sufferings. What a wrong Course then do the generality of Mankind take to make themselves happy! They seek for Happiness without, when the Foundation of Happiness must be laid within, in the Temper and Disposition of our Minds. An easy quiet Mind will weather all the Storms of Fortune; but how calm and serene soever the Heavens be, there is no peace to the wicked, who have nothing but

but noise, and tumult, and confusion within.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever, Amen.

SER-

SERMON VII.

Preach'd at the Funeral of the Reverend *Richard Meggot* D. D. and late Dean of *Winchester*, *December* the 10th. 1692. at *Twickenham*.

I. Phil. 23, 24.

For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.

Nevertheleſs to abide in the fleſh is more needful for you.

ST. *Paul* wrote this Epiſtle to *Philippi* from *Rome*, where he was in Bonds for the Goſpel; but though his Body was confined to a Priſon, his Soul, his great Divine Soul, was at Liberty to viſit the Churches he had planted, to adviſe and counſel and comfort them, to encreaſe their Knowledge, and to confirm their Faith, to inſtame their Zeal, and to ſpur them for-

forward to more perfect Attainmens in all Piety and Virtue.

The *Philippians* ſeem greatly concerned leaſt the Progreſs of the Goſpel ſhould be hindred by St. *Paul*'s Impriſonment, and leſt they and the whole Church ſhould be deprived of the Labours and Miniſtry of ſo great an Apoſtle, ſhould this Perſecution extend to Life, as they had reaſon to fear it would.

As for the firſt, St. *Paul* aſſures them, That his Bonds were for the furtherance of the Goſpel; for his Impriſonment was taken notice of both in the Court and City, which made Men curious to know, what that Doctrine was, which he preached, and for which he ſuffered Bonds; and this publiſhed the Goſpel more effectually than his Preaching could have done, *Verſe* 12, 13, *&c.*

As for the ſecond, he tells them, He was no farther concerned either about Life or Death, but that Chriſt might be *magnified in his Body.* If he lived, his Life was wholly devoted to the Service of Chriſt, and of his Church;

Church; if he died, it would be for his own great Advantage. *To me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain*; verſe 20, 21. and this made it a hard choice to him, whether he ſhould deſire to live or die: whether he ſhould get rid of his Bonds, and make his Eſcape out of a troubleſome World into the Regions of Eaſe and Reſt, to reap the Fruit of his Labours here in the eternal Enjoyment of his Lord, whom he had ſo faithfully ſerved; or whether he ſhould live to Encounter with a thouſand Difficulties and Deaths in the Service of Chriſt, and of the Souls of Men. *What I ſhould chuſe I wot not: for I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt, which is far better: nevertheleſs, to abide in the Fleſh is more needful for you.*

Was there ever ſuch a Diſpute as this before, That a Man, who was as certain to go to Heaven, as he was to die; who had himſelf been ſnatch'd up into the third Heavens, and had his Mind poſſeſt with ſtrong and vigorous and lively Idea's of the Glories of that place, who had ſeen and heard ſuch

ſuch things as could not be expreſſed; who ſaw a Crown, a glorious immarceſſible Crown prepared for him; I ſay, that ſuch a Man ſhould make any queſtion what he ſhould chuſe, whether immediately to take poſſeſſion of this Crown and Kingdom, or to live longer in this World to ſuffer Bonds and Impriſonments, Hunger, and Cold, and Stripes, and all the ill uſage which he had ſo often met with, for no other reaſon but ſtill to preach the Goſpel, and to enlarge the Borders of Chriſt's Church. What a Contempt is this, not only of the little Pleaſures and Satisfactions, but even of all the Miſeries of Life! What a Triumph is this over the World, over all the Frowns and Terrours of it! What a Triumph is this over Self! ſuch a degree of Self-denial as the Goſpel it ſelf does not command, which is in ſome ſence to deny Heaven, to deny all the Joys of Chriſt's Preſence for the ſake of doing good! For it is to delay, to put off Heaven, to adjourn his own Happineſs, that he may live the longer to ſerve his great Maſter, though with great Difficulties and Labours. What Love was this to his Lord!

what

hat Love was this to the Souls f Men! it is certainly the moſt per-ct imitation of the Love of Chriſt, hat is poſſible to Man; Chriſt ſo oved us, as to come down from Heaven to live a laborious Life, and o die an accurſed Death for us; this reat Apoſtle ſo loved his Lord, nd ſo loved the Souls of Men, that e made it his choice to ſtay ſome ime out of Heaven, and to encounter ll the Miſeries and Terrours of this Life, to ſerve Chriſt and his Church. Where is this Divine Spirit now to be found! Let us, my beloved Brethren, who are entruſted alſo with the Care of Souls by the *great Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls*, bluſh to think how far ſhort we fall of this Example: let this inſpire us with a flaming Love and Zeal for the Souls of Men, for whom Chriſt died, and make us at leaſt contented to deny our ſelves ſome of the Eaſe and Security and Pleaſures of Life, to ſerve the Church of Chriſt, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.

But to keep my ſelf within ſome Bounds, I ſhall briefly Diſcourſe on theſe

these two Heads, which are very proper for this Occasion, and very proper to my Text. *First*, The great Rewards of faithful Pastors and Ministers of Christ, and how much it is for their advantage to be removed out of this World. St. *Paul* was very sensible of this, which made him *desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. Secondly*, How necessary the Lives of such Men are to the Church, and what a great loss it is, when God removes them out of it. *Nevertheless to abide in the Flesh is more needful for you.*

1. Let us then consider in the first place the great Rewards of the faithful Ministers of Christ, and how much it is for their advantage *to depart, and to be with Christ.* Now I do not here intend a comparison between Heaven and Earth: Good God! what different things are these! and what Christian doubts, whether Heaven be a happier Place than this World! Heaven! whither no Troubles or Sorrows can follow us; no persecuting Sword, no persecuting Tongue: where we shall be delivered from all the Wants, Necessi-

ties,

es, and Infirmities of the Body, from unger and Cold and Nakedneſs, om wracking Pains and languiſhing ckneſſes; where there is eternal Eaſe d Reſt and Joy, without labour, ithout diſcontents, without quarrels; here our Souls ſhall be perfected in nowledge and in love; where we all dwell in the Preſence of God, ſee m as he is, and know him even as e are known; where we ſhall dwell ith Chriſt, adore his Love, behold s Glory, and be transformed our lves into the likeneſs and image of s Glory. We have but obſcure im-erfect Conceptions of theſe things ow; Heaven will out-do our higheſt xpectations, as much as the moſt erfect ſtate of Happineſs in this World, ways falls ſhort of what we expect-d; and this is the caſe of all good ſen, it is a mighty happy Change ney make, when they remove from arth to Heaven.

But there are different Degrees of Glory in the next World, proportion-d not only to our different attain-nents in Virtue, but to thoſe different Truſts in Services which we have been

employed in, and have faithfully discharged here. We read of the Reward of a Prophet, that he who gives a Cup of cold Water to a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, ſhall have a Prophet's Reward, which muſt ſignify ſome peculiar Reward that ſhall be beſtowed on Prophets: We know ſo little of the other World, that we cannot conceive, what theſe different Rewards ſhall be: The Prophet *Daniel* repreſents it by an external Glory, 12. Dan. 3. *And they that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament; and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever.* But our Saviour repreſents this by a different degree of Rule and Empire, 12. *Luke* 42, 43, 44. *And the Lord ſaid, Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom his Lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give them their meat in due ſeaſon?* This is the honourable Character of Goſpel Miniſters in this World, that they are *Rulers in God's houſhold*, to inſtruct and feed them with the Word of Life; and their Reward is proportioned to their Work: *Bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord, when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing. Of a truth I ſay*

unto

unto you, That he will make him ruler over all that he hath. What this *Rule* ſignifies in the other World, is a Myſtery to us, eſpecially ſince we have fancied the other World to be only a State of Contemplation, not of Action, where we ſhall have nothing to do but to ſee God, and to love and to praiſe him, but no ſervice to do for him; but we know there are different orders of Angels, who are employed in great Truſts and Offices, Arch-Angels, Angels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers, which are names of Rule and Government, though we know not what their Power and Authority is, nor how they Govern; in like manner our Saviour promiſes his Apoſtles, *Verily I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the ſon of man ſhall ſit on the throne of his glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael*, 19. Matth. 28. The like we may ſee in the Parable of the Pounds and Talents; He who hath gained ten Pounds had Rule over ten Cities; and he who gained five Pounds had Rule over five Cities: for theſe Servants to whom the Lord gave theſe

Pounds and Talents to improve, plainly ſignify his Stewards, and the Miniſters of his ſpiritual Kingdom: for no other Perſons have in ſo peculiar a manner this honourable Character of the Servants of Chriſt throughout the Goſpel. And if there be Order and Government among the Angels themſelves, Why ſhould we think that there is nothing like this among glorified Saints? If Angels are the Miniſters of God, there is no reaſon to think that Heaven is a State of meer Reſt and Contemplation, eſpecially when Happineſs conſiſts in Action. And if Chriſt have any Miniſters of his ſpiritual Kingdom in the next World, it is moſt reaſonable to think, that thoſe ſhall have the greateſt Authority, and be employed in the nobleſt Services, who have been his faithful Stewards and Miniſters in this World. For the Church on Earth and in Heaven is the ſame Church, though their State be very different; and therefore they do not loſe their relation to Chriſt, nor their ſtation in his Church by removing to Heaven. It is a Sacerdotal Kingdom, our *High Prieſt is King*; and therefore *a Prieſt of Jeſus*, how mean ſoever

ſoever this be thought now, will be one of the higheſt Characters in Heaven. What the Happineſs of this is, we cannot tell; but we know that there are no empty Titles in Heaven, but every degree of Dignity there ſignifies a peculiar degree of Happineſs; and what an advantageous exchange then is it for a faithful Miniſter of Jeſus to be removed from Earth to Heaven?

For let us conſider what the State of Chriſt's Miniſters is in this World; what it was in St. *Paul*'s days he tells us, 2 *Cor.* 6. 4---10. *In all things approving our ſelves as the Miniſters of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes, in ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in faſting; by pureneſs, by knowledge, by long-ſuffering, by kindneſſes, by the Holy Ghoſt, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the Armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left; by honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chaſtened and not killed; as ſorrowful, yet always rejoycing; as poor, yet making many rich; as hav-*

ing nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things, Which deſcribes a moſt laborious Life, a Scene of Wants, of Difficulties, of Sufferings; a perpetual exerciſe of paſſive Virtues, to reconcile the moſt appearing Contradictions, to live and ſtruggle and contend in this World, and to fetch their Comforts and Supports from Heaven.

This indeed is not always the State of the Chriſtian Church, nor of the Miniſters of it; but yet in the greateſt external Proſperity of the Church, the Miniſters of Religion, who diſcharged their Truſt with Diligence and Faithfulneſs, find many difficulties to encounter.

The care of Mens Souls is it ſelf a mighty Truſt; and *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?* conſider but the Charge St. *Paul* gives to *Timothy*, 1 Epiſtle 4. 11, *&c. Let no man deſpiſe thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity; give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Propheſy, by laying*

laying on of the hands of the Presbytery: Meditate upon these things; give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; take heed to thy self, and to thy doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thy self, and them that hear thee. Here is work enough to employ the whole Man, and our utmost care and diligence and prudence; work for the Study, for the Closet, for the Pulpit, as the same Apostle exhorts and charges *Timothy, to preach the word, to be instant in season, out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and Doctrine,* 2 Tim. 4. 2. But yet though there be Labour and Diligence in this, it would be a delightful work, were our Labours always blessed with success; could we rescue the Souls of Men from the Dominion of their Lusts, and from the power of the Devil; could we turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the power of Satan unto God; but we must often expect *to labour all night, and catch nothing*; we must contend with the Lusts and Vices of Men, must bear their Folly, their Frowardness, their Reproaches, and

Cenſures, and Injuries; be thought Troubleſome, Pragmatical, and Buſy-bodies, for our charitable Exhortations and Reproofs, and watchfulneſs over their Souls. And when the Church is at eaſe and reſt from without, how often is it rent and torn in Pieces with Schiſms and Hereſies? as St. *Paul* forewarned *Timothy*, *The time will come when they will not endure ſound Doctrine, but after their own luſts ſhall they heap to themſelves Teachers, having itching ears, and they ſhall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables*, 3, 4. *ver.* and what infinite Labours and Difficulties does this create to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to heal the Breaches of the Church, to confute Hereſies, Atheiſm, Infidelity, and to be ſcorned and perſecuted for it with a bitter Rage and Zeal? That St. *Paul* might well add, *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangeliſt, make full proof of thy miniſtry*, 5 verſe. We ought not indeed to be diſcouraged by ſuch difficulties as theſe, becauſe our Reward will be great in Heaven; but it will be a happy Day when *Our warfare ſhall be accompliſhed*, when

when we ſhall *ceaſe from our labours, and our works ſhall follow us:* when we can ſay with St. *Paul, I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteouſneſs.*

2. Thus to die is their gain; *Neverthelefs, it is more needful* for the Church, that *they ſhould abide in the fleſh:* And a great loſs it is to the Church, when they die. I need not uſe many words about this, for the caſe is plain. The Death of every good Man, who is very uſeful to the World, in what way ſoever he be uſeful, is a very great loſs; for Death puts an end to his doing any more good in this World: but as to take care of the Souls of Men, is to do the greateſt good to Mankind, becauſe the Happineſs of our Souls is of the greateſt concernment to us; ſo to loſe a faithful and a prudent Guide muſt be the greateſt loſs.

We indeed of this Church, have great reaſon to bleſs God, that he has

has ſent forth ſo many able and painful Labourers into his Harveſt, that it is not the loſs of every good Man that can much affect us at ordinary times: for there are great numbers of wiſe and good Men to perpetuate a Succeſſion of able and faithful Guides: but a St. *Paul* is at any time, and in any Age of the Church a great loſs: Nay, Men who are much Inferiour to St. *Paul*, but yet fitted with peculiar Abilities to ſerve the Church at ſome certain Seaſons, and in ſome difficult Circumſtances, are a very ſenſible loſs at ſuch a time, when their ſervice is moſt needful.

A Man of Counſel and Conduct, who is fit to ſit at the Helm, and knows how to ſteer in a Storm, is a great loſs, in times of Difficulty and Trouble, when the Church is aſſaulted on all hands, and it is hard to avoid one Miſchief or Inconvenience without running into another.

A Man of Goodneſs and Temper, who knows how to govern his own

own Paſſions, and how to ſoften and manage the Paſſions of other Men, is a very ſenſible loſs, when the Paſſions of Men are broke looſe, and diſturb the Peace of the Church, and even threaten the ruine of it.

A Man of Learning and ſound Judgment, who can diſtinguiſh betwen Truth and Error in all its moſt artificial and flattering Diſguiſes, is a great loſs, when old Errors are revived, and new ones broached; when we muſt diſpute over again the very Being of a God, the truth of the Scriptures, and Articles of the Chriſtian Faith.

A Man of great Diligence and Induſtry, Courage and Reſolution, to defend the Truth, to oppoſe Hereſies and Schiſms, to preſerve the Unity of the Church, and the Integrity of the Chriſtian Faith, is a very great loſs, when the Church is encompaſſed and aſſaulted with buſie and reſtleſs Enemies.

A Man of an exemplary Life, and untainted Virtue, who ſhines like a Light in the midſt of a crooked and per-

perverſe Generation, who maintains the declining Honour and Reputation of Religion and true Virtue, is a mighty loſs in a profligate Age, when men are grown ſuch Strangers to the ſincere practice of Virtue and Religion, that they begin to think there is no ſuch thing.

But I can go on no farther; the very mentioning of theſe things brings the freſh Idea of our deceaſed Brother to mind, and the afflicting Senſe of that great loſs, which we ſuffer by his Death. It becomes us to Reverence and Adore the Wiſdom of the divine Providence, even when we cannot underſtand the Reaſons of it. We are certain God is never wanting in his Care of his Church; and yet had we been made Judges of this Caſe, we ſhould have thought it a very ill time to have ſpared him.

He was abundantly furniſhed with all good Learning, both for Uſe and Ornament; he was an accompliſhed Scholar, and a well-ſtudied Divine; he knew Books and read them, and judged of them: He was a Scribe inſtructed

ructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, ho like a Houſholder could bring forth ut of his treaſure things New and Old, 13. *Matth.* 52. He had careful- y perus'd the ancient Philoſophers, Orators and Poets, to diſcover what Nature taught, which gave him a truer Knowledge and greater Value for the Excellency and Perfection of the Goſ- pel-Revelation.

He had true and clear Notions of Religion, and he was Maſter of them; he knew why he believed any thing, and was neither prejudiced nor impo- ſed on by popular Opinions; he was a hearty and zealous aſſertor of the Doctrine, Worſhip, Government and Diſcipline of the Church of *England*; he ſaw nothing material, which could be changed for the better, which made him jealous of Innovations, as not knowing where they would end. He was a Friend to all ſincere Chriſtians, pitied their Miſtakes, and bore with their Frowardneſs; but did not think that Chriſtian Charity required him to ſacrifice Truth, or good Order and Government, to the pretences of Peace and Unity.

He

He was for ſeveral Years a very diligent and conſtant Preacher to a numerous Auditory, till his own Dioceſan, who knew his Worth, and the weakneſs of his Conſtitution, and was deſirous to preſerve him for the Service of the Church, provided this Place where we now are, for his Eaſe, and Health, and Retirement; where he lived many Years a conſtant Preacher, though his Labours were then divided between his two Cures, which did not leſſen his Preaching, but made the Benefit of it the more diffuſive. For indeed he was an admirable Preacher, not for Noiſe and Lungs, but for well-digeſted uſeful pious Diſcourſes, delivered with all that becoming Gravity, Serioufneſs, and a commanding Elocution, as made them ſink deep into the Minds of his Hearers, and made them hear. This I ſpeak with Aſſurance and Confidence in this place, which was ſo long bleſſed with his Labours, With what fineneſs of Thought, perſpicuity and eaſineſs of Expreſſion, inſtructing and entertaining Images of Things, he expounded the Doctrines, and inculcated the Laws of our Saviour; how plainly he Taught, with what

what Vehemence and Paſſion he Exhorted, with what tender Sharpneſs he Reproved: remember how he uſed both to Pleaſe and Inſtruct, to Chide and Shame you without making you angry; how he has warmed and chafed your Minds into the moſt pious and ſerious Reſolutions, and ſent you home from this place wiſer and better than you came; and if you grew cold, and ſuffered your good Reſolutions to die again, conſider, I beſeech you, what Account you have to give.

As he grew in Years, it was neceſſary by degrees to eaſe his Labours; he could not Preach ſo often, but yet continued to Preach. And yet had he not Preached at all, or much leſs than he did, he had not ceaſed to be a very uſeful Paſtor to the Church; for he was a Man of great Experience, and great Prudence and Foreſight; fit for Government and Counſel; who knew Men and Things; was dexterous in his Applications, zealous without Paſſion or Peeviſhneſs, ſteady and reſolved without violent Oppoſitions, and needleſs Provocations; who ſerved the Church and the Truth with little Noiſe,

and

and without making many Enemies: And I am ſure at ſuch a time as this, there is more need of ſuch Men, and a much greater ſcarcity of them, than of good Preachers.

But he was not only a good Preacher and a prudent Guide, but a very good Man: he Preached continually by his Life and Example: his Converſation was Innocent, Entertaining, and Uſeful; he was a true ſincere Friend, very Courteous, Affable, Civil to all Men, but never pretended Friendſhip where he had none: he was ready to do all good Offices, was Liberal, Generous, and Charitable; a Man of a true publick Spirit, who ſcorned to ſerve himſelf to the Injury of others; who hated little Arts and Tricks, mean and ſervile Compliances: he was an open and generous Enemy, if we may ever call him an Enemy, who never wiſhed, never intended any hurt to any Man; but my meaning is, that when any Diſpute and Quarrel happened, as ſuch things will ſometimes happen, he was open and undiſguiſed, any Man might know what he diſliked, and had no reaſon to fear any thing worſe

worſe from him, than what he would ell them. In a Word, He was a very ood Chriſtian, and that made him ood in all Relations, and that Crown- d all his other Labours; he took care, s St. *Paul* did, *Leſt while he preached to thers, he himſelf ſhould become a caſt-away.* And now he is gone to reſt, and we muſt all ſhortly follow him; God grant hat we may all ſo run our Race, and iniſh our Courſe, that when we depart his Life, we may reſt in Him, as our ope is this our Brother doth; and may eceive that Crown of Righteouſneſs, which God the Righteous Judge, will t that Day beſtow on all his faithful Servants, and on all thoſe who love his Appearing.

SERMON VIII.

each'd at the *Temple*-Church, *December* 30. 1694. Upon the Sad Occaſion of the Death of our Gracious Queen. And Publiſhed at the Earneſt Requeſt of Several Maſters of the Bench of Both Societies.

XXXIX. Pſalm 9.

as dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didſt it.

THIS may be thought a very improper Text for the Feaſt of our Saviour's Birth, when our ouths ought to be filled with the Prai- of God, and ſing with the whole uire of Angels, *Glory be to God in the ighest, on earth peace, good will towards n.* This indeed is that Peace, which e World cannot give, and which the

World cannot take away; whatev
the External Appearances of Prov
dence are, here we find a ſafe retre
and a never-failing Spring of Joy: Fo
he that ſpared not his own Son, but d
livered him up for us all, how ſhall h
not with him alſo freely give us all thing
Who then *ſhall ſeparate us from the lo*
of Chriſt? Shall Tribulation, or Diſtre
or Perſecution, or Famine, or Nakedne
or Peril, or Sword? —— *Nay, in a*
theſe we are more than Conquerors throu
him that loved us. For I am perſwade
that neither death, nor life, nor a
gels, nor principalities, nor powers
nor things preſent, nor things to come
nor height, nor depth, nor any oth
creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate u
from the love of God, which is in Chri
Jeſus our Lord, 8. Rom. 32, 35, 37, &
While our minds are warmed wit
ſuch thoughts as theſe, we ſhall b
able to bear up under the greate
Trials, if not with Chearfulneſs
yet at leaſt with Patience and a qui
Submiſſion to the Will of God. An
if ever there were occaſion for ſuc
comfortable and ſupporting Thought
the Divine Providence has made it to
neceſſary at this time, to bear the Lo

an Incomparable Lady, our moſt racious Queen; whoſe Death all od Subjects muſt Lament, and I ay God forgive thoſe that do not. ch ſevere Providences as theſe, will ach the greateſt and moſt unbroken inds, *to ſerve the Lord with fear, and to joyce with trembling.* But how ſe-re ſoever Providence is in ſome par-cular inſtances, the ſenſe of the Di-ne Goodneſs in the Redemption of lankind by the Incarnation and eath of his own Son, ſhould teach s to be *dumb, and not open our mouths, cauſe it is his doings.*

In ſpeaking to which words, I all, 1. enquire, What may be called e doings of the Lord? 2. What it to be dumb, and not to open ur Mouths? 3. The force of this rgument, to oblige us to a quiet and atient Submiſſion under the great-ſt ſufferings, That it is God's do-ng.

1. What may be called the *do-ng of the Lord*? This may be thought very needleſs queſtion; for are here any Events, Good or Evil,

which are not God's doing? If we believe a particular Providence, we muſt anſwer, No; and yet ſome things are more peculiarly God's doings, than others are, with reſpect to this preſent Argument, as God's doing it, is a reaſon for a quiet and patient Submiſſion to the Divine Will.

In many caſes men bring Ruine and Miſery upon themſelves by their own ſin and folly, and then they may thank themſelves for it; but have no reaſon to complain of Providence; and when they cannot charge Providence with their misfortunes, patience it ſelf is not properly a Submiſſion to God; becauſe their ſufferings are no more God's will, than their ſin and folly is.

If men deſtroy their Eſtates by profuſeneſs and prodigality, and their Bodies by intemperance and luſt; if ill-contracted Friendſhips, indiſcreet Bargains, or an ungovernable Tongue, perplex their Affairs, and prove very troubleſome or dangerous, all this is owing, not merely to Providence, but to themſelves; and they muſt be contented to reap the

the fruit of their own doings, and to implore the Divine Goodneſs and Providence to deliver them from the evil conſequences of their own ſin and folly.

Whatever evils we ſuffer, which are not the natural or moral effects of our own ſin or folly, they are properly God's doings, as inflicted by God, either for the puniſhment of our ſins, or for the trial and exerciſe of our virtues, or to ſerve the wiſe ends of his Providence in the world.

Thoſe Evils which we do not immediately bring upon our ſelves, God inflicts on us, either by the miniſtry of wicked and injurious men, or by the diſorders of Natural Cauſes, or by ſome ſeeming caſual and fortuitous Events; for the Actions of Men, the Powers of Nature, and what we call Chance and Fortune, are all in the hands of God, and therefore are more or leſs his doings.

But if we may ſay, That ſome things are more peculiarly the care of Providence, than others, Life and Death are certainly ſo; no man can

be Born or Die, without the particular Order and Appointment of God: Our Saviour tells us, *not a ſparrow falls to the ground without our Father*; much leſs men; and aſſures his Diſciples, that *all the hairs of their head are numbred*; and their Lives are more ſacred than their Hairs. Some men are of opinion, That God has abſolutely Decreed the certain term and period of every man's life; But I know no foundation for this, neither in Scripture nor Reaſon; nor does any man believe it, but thoſe who ſubject all Mankind, and all the Things of this World, to irreverſible Neceſſity and Fate, which is the ſtrength of the Atheiſtick Hypotheſis; though incautiouſly eſpouſed by ſome men, who are ſo far from being Atheiſts, that I hope they are very good Chriſtians. And therefore, I ſuppoſe, theſe Chriſtian Fataliſts, if I may ſo call them, mean no more than what we all own, That no Sparrow, much leſs a Man, falls to the ground without our Father; that God not only foreknows the period of every man's Life, and by what means he ſhall

Die,

ie, but with Infinite Wiſdom and ıſtice, Orders and Appoints it; ot by an abſolute and unconditional ecree, but as the Wiſe Determiation of a Free and Juſt Providence.

And if God have any more conernment for Nations and Comonwealths, than he has for paricular men (as we, who can atend but a few things at once, and herefore make the matters of greateſt importance our more particular care, are apt to conceive) then the Lives and Deaths of Princes muſt be more particularly Ordered and Determined by God; becauſe Nations, it may be many Nations and Countries, more than their own, are concerned in the conſequence of it; and of the more univerſal concernment any thing is, the more we are apt to think it belongs to the Care of God.

For this reaſon ſome Philoſophers have confined the Providence of God to the Heavens, and Heavenly Bodies, which have ſuch a uniververſal influence on things below; or to Nations and Publick Societies, and to the ſeveral kinds and ſpecies

ſpecies of Beings, not to particular Men or Creatures.

And ſo far they were in the right, that if the Divine Providence could not equally take care of the whole World, and of every particular Creature in it; it would certainly in the firſt place take care of the great Springs of motion. But though this be no reaſon for God's peculiar care of one thing more than another, becauſe his All-ſeeing Eye, and Almighty Arm, can equally take care of all; yet our Saviour has taught us from the worth and value of things, that God will certainly take the more care of them, and in caſe of any Competition give the preference to things of the greateſt moment. *Behold the fowls of the air, for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them; are ye not much better than they?* And *if God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the oven, ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* 6. Matth. 26, 30. Where from God's care of mean Inferior Creatures, the Fowls of the Air,

Air, and the Graſs of the Field, he more ſtrongly concludes his care of Men; and by the ſame reaſon from his care of particular men, we may more ſtrongly conclude his care of Kingdoms and Nations, and therefore of the Lives of Princes, who are the great Miniſters of his Government and Providence, and whoſe Lives or Deaths make ſuch a mighty Change in the Affairs of the World. So that when, or by what means ſoever Princes dye, this is God's doings; and how ſevere ſoever we may feel it, *We muſt be dumb, and not open our mouths, becauſe he has done it*; which is the

2. Thing to be explained, What is meant by being *dumb, and not opening our mouths.* For this ſeems a very hard ſaying in the ſtrict literal ſenſe, that we muſt not complain of our Sufferings, when we feel 'em ſmart: Humane Nature can't bear this; we muſt feel our Sufferings, and when we feel them, we muſt complain: To have no ſenſe of what we ſuffer, is Stupidity,

ty, not Submiſſion; it is irreverence for the Judgments of God, and in ſome caſes the moſt unpardonable baſeneſs and ingratitude to Men. To be unconcerned for the Death of our deareſt Friends, or greateſt Patrons and Benefactors, not to pay Nature's Tribute to their Memories in a Sigh and a Tear; not to long after them, and ſend ſome vain Wiſhes to call them back; not to preſerve their Idea freſh in our minds, and to think with ſome uneaſineſs of thoſe happy hours which their Converſation ſweetn'd; to part with our Friends, as if we ſuffered nothing by their loſs, and were as well without them; is ſo far from being a Virtue, that ſuch a man is uncapable of ever being a Friend, and never deſerves to have any; much more then, when we loſe a publick Friend and Benefactor, the greateſt of Friends and Benefactors, which is a good Prince.

Let us briefly conſider, what we have loſt in the loſs of our Gracious Queen, and try if we can bear

bear the thoughts of it without complaining. She was the Glory of her Sex, and an Ornament to the Crown ſhe wore; made truly Great by Nature, Birth, and Education.

She had a large and capacious Mind, a quick and lively Apprehenſion, and a piercing and ſolid Judgment: She had a ſtrength and firmneſs of Mind beyond her Sex, and ſuch a dexterity in managing the greateſt Affairs, as would have become the greateſt and moſt experienced Miniſters. Never was there greater skill in Government, with leſs fondneſs for it, which ſhe could take up and lay down, with the ſame equality and indifferency of Mind; Though, I doubt, I muſt unſay that; for ſhe was always grieved at the occaſion of taking the Government, and as glad to reſign it.

Never was Majeſty better tempered with eaſineſs and ſweetneſs. She knew how to be familiar, without making her ſelf cheap, and to condeſcend without meanneſs. She had all the Greatneſs of Majeſty, with all the Virtues of Converſation; and knew very well, what

what became her Table, and what became the Council-Board.

She underſtood her Religion, and loved it, and practiſed it; and was the greateſt Example of the Age, of a conſtant, regular, unaffected Devotion, and of all the eminent Vertues of a *Chriſtian Life*. In the midſt of all the great *Affairs* of *State*, ſhe would rather ſpare time from her ſleep, than from her Prayers, where ſhe always appeared with that great compoſure and ſerioufneſs of Mind, as if her Court had been a Nunnery, and ſhe had had nothing elſe to do in the World.

In all the Eaſe and Proſperity of Fortune ſhe had that tenderneſs and compaſſion for thoſe, who ſuffered, which ſufferings themſelves cannot teach meaner Perſons. She was Charitable to the utmoſt of her Power, amidſt all the Expences of War and Government; and when a proper Object was preſented to her, was always pleaſed, when ſhe could grant their requeſts, and very uneaſy to deny.

In ſhort, her greateſt and moſt implacable Enemies, (for Virtue itſelf will meet with Enemies in this World) had no other Fault to charge her with, but her Throne; which is the only thing, for which moſt other Princes are valuable. She aſcended the Throne indeed before ſhe deſired it; but was thruſt into it, not by an haſty Ambition, but to ſave a ſinking Church and Kingdom; and I hope *England* will always have reaſon to ſay, That an empty Throne could never have been filled with a nobler Pair.

But though the neceſſary abſence of the King, to give check to the Progreſs of a Powerful and Inſulting Monarch, engaged her more than ſhe deſired in *State Affairs*; yet the promoting of true Religion, and the ſervice of the Church of *England*, [the greateſt and beſt Nurſery of it, ſince the Apoſtolick Age], was her conſtant and natural Care. This her Thoughts were full of, and ſhe had formed great and noble Deſigns, had ſhe outlived the Difficulties and Expences

of

of War; and been at leiſure to attend the peaceful Arts of Government.

I have reaſon to ſay this, from thoſe frequent Intimations I have had from our late admirable Primate, who had great Deſigns Himſelf to ſerve the *Chriſtian Religion*, and the *Church* of *England*, in its ttueſt Intereſts; and had inſpired Their Majeſties, and particularly the Queen, who had more leiſure for ſuch Thoughts, with the ſame great and pious Deſigns: It may be no Church-man ever had, I am ſure not more deſervedly, a greater Intereſt in his Prince's Favour; and the great Uſe he made of it, was to do publick ſervice to Religion; and, what ever ſome Men might ſuſpect, to the *Church* of *England*, though it may be not perfectly in their Way: And the greateſt Fault I know he had, was, That ſome envious and ambitious Men could not bear his Greatneſs, which he himſelf never courted, nay, which he induſtriouſly avoided.

Before this, all *England* knew and owned his Worth; and had it been

en put to the Poll, there had en vaſt Odds on his ſide, that would have been voted into the e of *Canterbury*; for no Man had er a clearer and brighter Reaſon, truer Judgment, a more eaſy and ppy Expreſſion, nor a more inflexi- e, fearleſs Honeſty: he was a ue and hearty Friend, and was a ue Friend whereever he profeſ- d to be ſo: Though he had ma- Enemies at laſt, he took care make none. He was obliging all Men; and though he could t eaſily part with a Friend, he uld eaſily forgive an Enemy; that Bundle of Libels witneſſes, hich was found among his other pers, with this Inſcription: *Theſe e Libels; I pray God forgive them; do.*

But I cannot give you the juſt haracter of this Great Man now; hat I have already ſaid, I con- ſs, is an Excurſion, which I hope ou will pardon to the Paſſion of n old Friend; and learn from wo great Examples, That neither he greateſt Innocence, Virtue, or Merit, can defend, either Crowned

or Mitred Heads, from the lashing spiteful and envenomed Tongues. But what a Loss has *Religion* and the *Church* of *England*, in such a critical Time, in the Death of such a *Queen*, and such a *Prelate*! I pray God make up this Loss.

In a word, That great Passion which afflicts and oppresses our good King, gives an unexceptionable Testimony to the incomparable Worth of our deceased *Queen*; The too severe and visible Effects of it shew, that it is not an ordinary, nor a dissembled Passion; Nor is it an ordinary thing, for a Prince of so great a Mind, who can look the most formidable Dangers, and Death it self, in the face, without fear; whom all the Powers of *Hell* cannot make look pale or tremble, to sink, and faint, and to feel all the Agonies of Death in the dying Looks of a Beloved Consort. All Story cannot furnish us with many Examples of such soft and tender Passions, in such a warlike and fearless Mind; and what but a mighty Vertue could so charm a Prince, as to forget his natural Constancy

d Reſolution? I'm ſure though we y very dear for the Experiment the loſs of an excellent *Queen*, e have ſo much the more reaſon think our ſelves happy in a ng; for a due mixture and tempe- ment of ſuch fearleſs Courage and avery, and ſuch tender Paſſions, is e moſt perfect Compoſition of an ex- llent Prince.

And now it may be, you will tell e, that I have taken great pains confute my Text, and that I ave done it effectually; for we ught not to be dumb, but may ery juſtly complain of ſuch a loſs s this.

This I readily grant, That we ay complain of ſuch a loſs; but his is no confutation of my Text. Ve may complain, and give Eaſe nd Vent to our Sorrows by ſuch Complaints, while we do not com- lain againſt God, and accuſe him oolihly. To ſubmit to the Will of God, which is here expreſt by be- ng *Dumb, and not opening our Mouths,* does not ſignify, not to feel our Loſſes and Sufferings, or not to complain of them; but not to re-

proach the Divine Providence, nor to caſt off our Hope and Truſt in God. *Job* felt his Sufferings, and complained of them in as moving and tragical Expreſſions, as any other Man could, and yet is propoſed to us, as an Example of admirable Patience, becauſe he did not *charge God fooliſhly*, nor caſt off his hope in him.

This we never can have any reaſon for; for whatever we ſuffer, it is a wiſe and merciful Providence which inflicts it: But yet Mankind are very apt, when they ſuffer hard things, either to deny a Providence, or which is more abſurd, and unreaſonable, to reproach it; for if there be a God, he is Wiſe, and Good, and Merciful, and Juſt, which is the Notion all Mankind have of God; and if this God governs the World, all Events are ordered with Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Goodneſs; and all thinking Men, in cool and ſober Thoughts, will be aſhamed to quarrel with ſuch a Providence.

But yet we are very apt to aſk Queſtions, which we cannot eaſily anſwer,

ſwer, and then to make our own ig-
rance an Objection againſt the Di-
ne Providence.

As in the Caſe before us, the
dden and untimely Death of an
cellent Princeſs, who had Strength
d Vigor of Age, which promiſed
much longer Life, and who
ould certainly have done great
ood to the World, as long as ſhe
d lived; but is cut off in the
igor and Strength of Age, and all
er Thoughts, even all her great
nd excellent Deſigns of doing Good
the World, periſh with her;
hile Tyrants and Oppreſſors live
be the Plagues and Scourges of
Mankind.

Now though we do not know
he particular Reaſons of ſuch Pro-
idences, yet it is eaſy to frame
ome general Anſwers, which may
atisfy all the Friends of Provi-
dence.

If the Objection relates to our
elves, who ſuffer by this Loſs,
here is a very plain Anſwer to it,
ut a very terrible one; That God
s Angry with us, and by the un-
timely Death of an excellent Prin-

ceſs, who made it her whole Study and Deſign to do us Good, threatens his Judgments againſt us, if we do not take Care to prevent them by a timely Repentance.

If the Objection relates only to the untimely Death of an excellent Princeſs, that ſhe ſhould ſo ſuddenly be ſnatched away from the Joys and Pleaſures of a Throne; this is no Objection at all; at leaſt not an Objection fit for Chriſtians to make: For can we think, that the greateſt and moſt happy Monarch loſes any thing by the Exchange, if he be tranſlated from Earth to Heaven? That the Joys of Paradiſe are not greater than a Crown? Our good *Queen* did not think ſo, who knew what an Earthly Crown meant, but was willing to part with it for Heaven; who ſaw Death approaching without fear, and prepared to receive its Stroke with that calmneſs and ſedateneſs of Mind, as nothing could give but an innocent Conſcience, and much greater Hopes.

But as for our ſelves, though we

uſt acknowledge that we have re-
ived a very great Loſs, in the
eath of an excellent *Queen*, yet we
ave no reaſon to quarrel at Pro-
idence, while God preſerves our
ing to go in and out before us.
Ve had indeed perpetual Day; and
o ſooner was one Sun withdrawn,
ut another aſcended our Horizon,
ith equal Luſtre and Brightneſs:
his was a peculiar Happineſs
hich we never had before, and
hich the Neceſſities of our Affairs
equired now; but though God has
ut us ſhort in this, we have a
ing ſtill, the Terror of *France*,
nd the Protector of *Europe*; a King,
hom Affection as well as Blood has
aturalized to us; who loves our
ation and our Church, which he
as once delivered, and God grant
e may live long to ſettle and pro-
ect both. We have no reaſon to fear
ur Enemies, either at home or a-
road, while a Prince is at the Helm,
who wants neither Counſel nor Cou-
age; eſpecially if we follow that no-
le Example, which the Two Hou-
ſes of Parliament have ſet us, to give
him ſuch freſh Aſſurances of our Fi-

delity, as may ſtrengthen his Hands againſt his and our Enemies Abroad, and make him eaſy and ſafe at Home.

To conclude, This is God's doing, and it becomes us to be dumb, and not to open our Mouths, becauſe he has done it: He is the Sovereign and Unaccountable Lord of the World; who ſhall ſay unto him, What doſt thou? Life and Death are in his hands; the Fates of Princes and Kingdoms. That he has done it, ſhould be a ſufficient Reaſon to us to ſubmit, becauſe though he does things great and wonderful, and beyond our Underſtanding, yet he never does any thing but what is wiſe and good: This I'm ſure is the moſt effectual way to turn even the ſevereſt Judgments into Bleſſings, to reverence God, and to humble our ſelves under his mighty hand, and implore his Mercy, to repair thoſe Breaches he has made upon us. We muſt not complain of Providence; but we may make our Complaints to God, and be the more importunate in our Prayers for the Preſervation of our King. The Death of our excellent

Queen

Queen both calls for, and will juſtify and recommend ſuch humble Importunities; and the preſervation of our King, will, in a great meaſure, make up this Loſs to us; *Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever,* Amen.

SER-

SERMON IX.

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen, at the Parish-Church of St. *Bridget*, on *Tuesday* in *Easter*-Week, *April* 6. 1697.

2 Cor. VIII. 12.

For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

THE Occasion of these Words was this. The Christians of *Judæa* were at this time in great Want, by reason of a general Dearth, which was foretold by *Agabus* at *Antioch*, *Acts* 11. 28. *And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit, That there should be great dearth throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.* Upon this Notice, *the Disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the Brethren which dwelt in Judæa.*

This

This is that Contribution for the Saints which St. *Paul* directs them about, at the Concluſion of his firſt Epiſtle to them, Ch. 16. and this is what he inculcates on them in this and the following Chapter, but with ſo much Art and Inſinuation, that though he uſes the moſt powerful Arguments, yet he would not ſeem to perſuade, nor to think that they needed any Perſuaſion; for it is not Honourable for Chriſtians, whoſe Religion is Charity, to need ſuch Perſuaſions and Importunities. They may be directed in their Charity, and put in Mind of ſuch particular Charities as are of the greateſt Neceſſity, or the moſt preſent uſe, or have the moſt general Influence, or do the greateſt Reputation and Service to Religion; or their Charity may be heightened, inflamed, and enlarged, by the proper Arguments and Motives of Liberality; but their Religion teaches them to be Charitable, and the Name and Profeſſion of a Chriſtian is a Reproach to them without it: And this is all the Apoſtle aims at even in his ſoft and tender way of Perſuaſion; not merely to perſuade them to contribute to the Neceſſities of the Saints,

aints, which he knew theywere willing o do; but that they ſhould contri-ute liberally, with a free and chearful Heart, and open Hand; which is the um of all his Arguments, as I ſhall hew you in the Concluſion, if Time ermit.

But the great Difficulty concerns the proper Meaſures of a liberal and over-flowing Charity. Our Saviour has preſcribed no ſet Bounds and Proportions to our Charity; and it is thought as poſſible to be imprudent and exceſſive, as too frugal and ſparing: We have many other Obligations upon us beſides CHARITY; to provide for our own comfortable Subſiſtence, to take Care of our Wives and Children, and to diſcharge all other Duties and Offices according to our Station and Character in the World: All which ought to ſet Bounds to our Charity. But what theſe Bounds are, is thought the great Queſtion, which is not eaſily anſwered: This is true; nor can any certain Meaſures be preſcribed; nor does the Apoſtle pretend to it: But though there is a great Latitude in true Chriſtian Charity, which does not conſiſt in a Point, but ad-

admits of different degrees and Proportions; yet the Apoſtle, in my Text, directs us to ſuch a Principle, as is much better and ſafer than any ſtated Rules, becauſe it will be ſure never to ſink below the juſt Proportions of Charity; and will render all we do, be it more or leſs, very acceptable to God. *For if there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

In which Words, I ſhall obſerve Three Things, which are expreſſed, or neceſſarily implied in them. *Firſt*, That a great readineſs and Forwardneſs of Mind, to do Good, is the true Spirit of Charity; which gives Value and Acceptation to all we do. *Secondly*, That this readineſs of Mind to do Good, to Relieve the Neceſſities of thoſe who want, will obſerve the juſt Proportions of Giving, will give *according to what a man hath*: as is neceſſarily implied in the Words; for if a willing Mind be accepted, according to what a man hath, it is, becauſe it gives according to what a man hath. *Thirdly*, That where there is this Willing Mind, with a fitting Proportion

portion according to our Abilities, whether it be more or less, which we give, it is equally acceptable to God. Such a Man *is accepted according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not.* I shall speak as briefly as I can to each of these, that I may not be prevented in such an Application, as is proper to this Solemnity.

First, That a great Readiness and Forwardness of Mind (προθυμία signifies) to do Good; to relieve the Necessities of those in Want, is the true Spirit of Charity, and gives Value and Acceptation to all we do. Such a Willingness of Mind, when προκειται, it is the Principle and first Mover in all our Charitable Actions, is εὐπρόσδεκτος very acceptable to God.

This, I think, I may take for granted; for what is the Grace and Vertue of Charity, but a Charitable Inclination, Disposition, Temper, Habit of Mind? And what is this but a Readiness and Forwardness to do Good? Our Inclinations and Passions are the Principles of Action, and therefore have a natural Tendency towards their proper

proper Acts and Objects, and will act when they have the Power and Opportunity of Action: Charity is Love, the Love of Pity and Compaſſion to the Miſeries and Sufferings, and Wants of our Brethren; and Love in all other Inſtances is a very reſtleſs active Principle; and ſo will our Love to the Poor and Miſerable be, if it be Inclination and Habit.

There is no man but will pretend to be very ready and willing to do Good, though he never does any: For to have no Inclination to do Good, is ſo Infamous, that thoſe who do no good, are aſhamed to own it; but to do no good, is a plain Evidence againſt them, when nothing can hinder them from doing Good, but the want of Will and Inclination to do it; when God has furniſhed them with the means of doing Good, and there are thouſands of Objects to exerciſe their Charity, and to move their Pity, if they had any. The Will is accepted for the Deed, both by God and Men, when it is not in our Power to do that Good which we ſincerely deſire to do, and which we would certainly do, were it in our Power; but it is to mock both God and

Men

Men, to pretend a Willingneſs, when it is viſible to all the World, That a Will to do Good is the only thing we want. But ſuch a Readineſs and Willingneſs of Mind as is Active and Vigorous, as contrives and lays Deſigns of Charity, or embraces ſuch as are offered, and takes all wiſe Opportunities of doing Good, this is very acceptable to God, as being the moſt Divine and God-like Temper, the Image of his own Goodneſs, and the nobleſt Exerciſe of our Love to Men, inſpired with the Love of God. Now in Moral Actions it is the Principle that gives the Value; not ſo much the Gift, as the Mind of the Giver; and therefore St. *Paul* tells us, That though *we give all our goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, we are nothing*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. God can feed the poor without us, if he ſo pleaſes; but as for ſeveral other wiſe ends of Providence, ſo he has ordered, That *the poor ſhall be always with us* for the trial and exerciſe of our Virtue, but the Virtue is not the Gift, but the Charity. And could we perform all the Acts of Charity without a charitable Mind, the World might be better for it, but not we our ſelves.

2*dly*. This readineſs and forwardneſs of Mind to do good, will obſerve the juſt proportions of Charity, will give *according to what a man hath*. I obſerved before, That our Saviour in his Goſpel hath preſcribed no fixt Meaſures nor Proportions of Charity: Nor could he reaſonably do this, conſidering the nature of Charity; which though it be not ſo abſolutely free, that we may chuſe whether we will be charitable or no (for charitable we muſt be at the peril of our Souls); yet the proportions muſt be free, or it is not Charity, but a Poor's rate, as all the poſitive Laws, which God gave the *Jews* for the relief of the Poor, were no better; and therefore, by the wiſer *Jews*, were never placed to the account of Charity, but of Juſtice, and a Legal Righteouſneſs: Which is the very diſtinction St. *Paul* makes between a *righteous* and a *good man*, Rom. 5. 7. *But ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man one would even dare to die. A Righteous man* is one, who is legally Righteous, and obſerves what the Law requires; but a Good man is one who is acted by a free, unconfined and generous Goodneſs.

Now

Now upon this pretence, That there no proportion aſſigned to Charity, ere are too many, who content themlves with very little, indeed with noing which can properly be called Chaty. But I wonder in the mean time hat theſe men make of all thoſe Comands and Exhortations which we find the Goſpel to Charity, which are ſo any, ſo preſſing and importunate, and ound on us by ſo many promiſes of reſent and future Rewards, and with many terrible Threatnings denoun-ed againſt the uncharitable, that ſure-they muſt mean ſomething; and as illing as men are in theſe Caſes to retend Ignorance, I believe there are w men living, but know in ſome meaure what Charity means: And though hey may diſpute how much they ought o give, yet certainly know, that they ught to give; and that to give nohing, or what is next to nothing, all Circumſtances conſidered, is not Chaity.

A Charitable Temper and Diſpoſition f Mind is an indiſpenſible Duty, and he moſt Eſſential Part of the Chriſtin Religion. This our Saviour commands, and he need command no more,

for Charity is and will be a Rule and Meaſure to it ſelf. Where this Divine Principle is, it will teach us when, and how, and in what Proportion to give: The Sun needs no Rules and Directions how to communicate its Light and Heat. Nature is the ſureſt and moſt infallible Rule, and Law to it ſelf; and thus it is proportionably in Moral as well as in Natural Agents. For what is the immediate effect of Nature and Life, can never be taught without its Principle; cannot exceed its Principle, and cannot fall below it. All the Rules in the World can never teach that man Charity, who wants the Principle; a Charitable Mind needs no Rules, but turns naturally on its own Byas; which will direct its Motions right.

There is a great difference indeed between Natural and Moral Agents. Natural Agents are neceſſarily determined to ſome one End, and therefore have but one Principle, which uniformly and ſteddily purſues the Ends of Nature; but Moral Agents, as they act freely, ſo they have many different Principles, Inclinations, and Paſſions, which ſtint and limit each other; that none of them can act to their utmoſt Vigour,

igour, but as they are mutually poi-
ed and ballanced: And this is the
ork of Reaſon and Religion, to put
em into their Natural Order, and to
t juſt Bounds to them; and that pro-
ortions the degrees of their Activity
nd Strength; but yet every Principle,
nleſs violently oppreſſed, will act ac-
ording to its Nature, as it more or
ſs prevails. And this gives Mea-
ures and Proportions to all our Acti-
ns; as to ſhew you this in our pre-
nt Caſe.

Charity is that Love to Mankind
hich makes us pity all their Wants
nd Sufferings, and inſpires us with a
reat Zeal and Concernment to Help
nd Relieve them. If you enquire,
What the Natural Meaſure of this
Charity is? I know no other Natural
Meaſure, but its Natural End, that is,
To relieve all that ſuffer and are in
want; for that is what Charity would
do, and what all Charitable Men hear-
tily wiſh that they could do. Well!
but this is impoſſible, for there are too
many miſerable People for any man to
Relieve them all. This is true, and
Want of Power muſt of Neceſſity ſet
Bounds to our Charity; but ſince we

cannot Relieve all, we muſt relieve ſuch as we can; and wiſely conſider where the greateſt Neceſſities, and greateſt Obligations are: Which will give the Preference to Chriſtians before Infidels; to Good Men before the Wicked; to God's Poor, whom the Divine Providence has made Poor, to the Poor of their own Making, whom Idleneſs, Luxury, and Vice have made Poor and Miſerable. Well! But how far muſt we Relieve theſe Poor? Muſt we give as long as we have any thing to give, and make our ſelves the Objects of Charity? By no means! There are other as Natural Principles as Charity, which muſt ſet Bounds to it. Self-Love is a Natural and Neceſſary Principle; no man is bound to love any man better than himſelf: To love our Neighbour as our ſelves, is all that the Goſpel it ſelf makes our neceſſary Duty; though ſome Great and Generous Friendſhips, and Divine Charities, may go further, as far as concerns this Life. Next to Self-love, our Natural Affection for our Wives and Children muſt take place, as ingrafted in it, and thought the Beſt and the Deareſt Part of it, as being near-

eſt

ſt to our ſelves, and what the beſt nen are the moſt tenderly concerned or. And this is the chief thing, which mong men of any Principles, diſputes he Bounds of Charity: For as for hoſe ſtupid Brutes, who love Money only to look on, or to count their Bags and Securities, without ſuffering themſelves, or any body elſe, to uſe it, they are not fit to be named: For I can hardly reckon them among reaſonable Creatures. But men's Care of themſelves, and of their Wives and Children (not to deſcend at preſent to other Relations, which may come within the compaſs of Charity, though of a nearer and more ſacred Obligation) is thought a very Prudent and Reaſonable Conſideration in this Caſe, and indeed is ſo; for there is a great deal of Truth and Reaſon in that common Saying, rightly underſtood, That *Charity begins at Home.*

The great Controverſy then is between our Love to our Selves, our Wives and Children; and Charity to the Poor. Now there is no Diſpute, but the Firſt muſt have the Preference; but yet Charity to the Poor muſt have its Place alſo: And then the only

Queſtion is, In what Proportion this muſt be? And that is a very hard Queſtion, if you put it in Arithmetick, for I can name no Proportion; nor has our Saviour thought fit to name any: But, as I obſerved to you before, True Charity will aſſign a juſt Proportion to it ſelf: For a true Charitable Mind will ſpare what it reaſonably can, and never below the Proportion of Charity; and will ſpare more or leſs, according to the Degrees of its Charity. I muſt be forced to repreſent this in ſhort to you, that I may not be tedious.

That Love we have for our ſelves, and for our Natural Dependents, will generally ſecure us againſt exceeding the Proportions of Charity, that there is ſeldom any Danger on that ſide. On the other hand, if we have a true Charitable Mind, and a ſincere Compaſſion for the Sufferings of others, we ſhall certainly do what we our ſelves, conſidering our Circumſtances, and what all Charitable men who know our Circumſtances, will call Charity. But then, the more Intenſe and Fervent our Charity is, this will ſtill increaſe the Proportion, and ſometimes to ſuch Heights,

leights, as can hardly escape the censure of Affectation and Folly: And were it not for the Interposition of the Divine Providence, might sometimes prove very fatal to themselves and their Families. As to give you the Account of this in short; There are Two things absolutely necessary to dispose men to Give Liberally: A just Sense of the Miseries of others; and a true Judgment of our own Abilities.

As for the First:

A Charitable Mind is very easy to receive the Impressions of Charity; and the more charitably it is disposed, still the more easy. Every pitiable Object moves and affects such men, and they are no more able to resist the Silent Oratory of meager Looks, naked Backs, and hungry Bellies (were they not sometimes harden'd by Cheats and Vagabonds) than to deny themselves what is Necessary to Life: Much less can they deny any known and unquestioned Charity; for since Charitable they are, and Acts of Charity they will do, they are very glad to know how to dispose of their Charity, to do that Good which they intend by it. A soft

and

and tender Mind, which feels the Sufferings of others, and ſuffers with them, is the true Temper and Spirit of Charity; and Nature prompts us to eaſe thoſe Sufferings, which we feel: This makes us ſo ready to ſupply our own Wants, becauſe we have a quick and ſmart Senſe of them; and the Chriſtian Sympathy and fellow-feeling of Charity, will proportionably incline us to relieve our Suffering Brethren, when we feel in our ſelves what it is they ſuffer. An inward Principle is more powerful than all external Arguments; and Senſe and Feeling is this Principle; and Charity is this Senſe.

Thus as for Proportions, a Charitable Mind ſets no other Bounds to its Charity, but only Ability; that the only Queſtion is, Whether we can ſpare any thing from our ſelves and Families; and what we can ſpare? Now when Charity is the judge of this, it is always a favourable Judge on the ſide of the Poor and Miſerable, and always the more favourable Judge, the greater the Charity is: It will teach us to think, That we want leſs, and conſequently can ſpare more, when we conſider how much others want:

At

At leaſt it will teach us to abate of what we do not want; of all Idle and Superfluous Expences; of all needleſs Pomp and Ceremony, which is more than our Station and Character requires; and it is incredible to think what an inexhauſted Fund this would be for Charity: Did we truly eſtimate our own Wants, rectify our Expences, and ſet juſt Bounds to our Deſires, many of us would ſoon find, that we have a great deal to ſpare: And nothing will ſo effectually do this, as Charity; and therefore Charity is the beſt Rule and Meaſure to it ſelf. So that there is no great occaſion to diſpute Proportions; let us learn to be Charitable, and Charity will teach us what to give. Every man can tell when another is Charitable; and a Charitable man can tell when he himſelf is ſo; and as our Charity increaſes, ſo we ſhall abound in the Fruits of Charity; for the more we love, the more liberally we ſhall give.

This is not to leave what we will give to Charitable Uſes, to our own free Choice, as a Trial of our Ingenuity, as ſome repreſent it: For had this been the Caſe, there ſhould have been ſome Proportion fixt, leſs than which we

we ſhould not give, though we might give as much more as we pleaſed; for otherwiſe nothing is matter of ſtrict Duty, but all is left to Ingenuity; which is ſo far from being true, that there is not a more neceſſary Duty in all Religion than Charity; and even the greateſt Degrees and Heights of Charity, are all Duty: For we are commanded to be Charitable, and to aim at the higheſt Degrees of Charity; and the Proportion of giving is referred to the Principle, and included in the Degrees of Charity; ſuch a Proportion as ſuch a Degree of Charity will give, is as much a ſtrict Duty as ſuch a Degree of Charity is.

The very nature of Charity proves that thus it is, and that it can't be otherwiſe. For meerly to give, or not to give; to give more or leſs, is no certain proof of a charitable, or uncharitable Man; how liberally ſoever we give, we are not charitable, unleſs we give from a Principle of Charity, and our Charity be as great as our Gift. So that had God preſcribed how much every Man muſt give to the Poor, they might have obſerved this proportion of Giving without any Charity, and then ſuch Gifts as theſe had been no acts of

Charity,

Charity, when the Gift and the Charity was parted: But a Charitable Man will give, and will give in proportion to the degrees of his Charity, and therefore Charity, and the encreaſe of Charity, is the only proper object of Command; for he will give liberally, who loves much; and the proportion of giving is commanded in the degrees of Charity, which alone can preſcribe, and will obſerve a juſt proportion.

Let no Man then enquire, how much he muſt give; the proper enquiry is, how much he muſt love. Let no man ſatisfy himſelf with ſome ſmall trifling Preſents, which bear no proportion to what he has, upon pretence that God has preſcribed no proportion of giving; but let him ask himſelf, Whether, in his own Conſcience, what he gives, bears any proportion to that love and charity to the poor and miſerable, which God requires: and let him remember, that though God has not fixt the proportions of giving, he requires great degrees of Charity; and though Men may give liberally without Charity, yet not to give in ſome due proportion, is a certain ſign of want of Charity, when there wants no ability to give.

Give me leave to obſerve by the way, that what I have now ſaid of Charity, is true of all other Chriſtian Graces and Virtues; that it is the principle, which both muſt and will give laws and meaſures to the external acts of ſuch Graces and Virtues: As to inſtance at preſent only in the Acts of Religious Worſhip, the meaſures and proportions of which are as much diſputed, and no more determined and limited by the Laws of our Saviour, than thoſe of Charity: We are commanded to faſt, and pray, and to communicate at the Lord's Table, and to read and meditate on the Holy Scriptures, and ſuch other acts of Religion; but we are not told, how often we muſt faſt and pray, and receive the Lord's Supper, nor how much time we muſt ſpend in our publick or private Devotions; for though all the publick Exerciſes of Religion muſt be regulated by the publick Authority of the Church; which as to time and place, and other external circumſtances, is the ſafeſt rule; yet our private Devotions are free, and both publick and private Devotions have a great latitude; and thus as it is in the caſe of Charity, ſome men think, they can never ſpend

time

me enough in the publick and private xerciſes of Religion; and others hink a very little will ſerve the turn, nd any trifling pretence is ſufficient to xcuſe them from their Cloſets, or the Church, and eſpecially from the Lord's Table.

And the reſolution of this is the ſame, s in the caſe of Charity; We are commanded to be devout Worſhippers of God, and the true ſpirit of Devotion naturally preſcribes the external meaſures and proportions. Devout minds, who have a true ſenſe of God, and of their conſtant dependance on him; That they owe all temporal and ſpiritual Bleſſings to him, and daily need the pardon of their Sins, the protection of his Providence, and the ſupplies of his Grace, will never fail to worſhip God, whom they inwardly reverence and adore; and as our devout ſenſe of God encreaſes in ſtrength and vigour, the external expreſſions of devotion will be more frequent, more lively and affecting; for nature will exert it ſelf, and will exert it ſelf in proportion to its ſtrength and vigour. But to return.

3. The third thing I propoſed, I muſt at preſent wave; that where there is a willing mind, with a fit proportion, according

cording to our abilities, (which, as you have heard, there will be, where there is a truly willing and charitable mind) whether it be more or leſs that we give, it is equally acceptable to God. Such a man is accepted according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not; and indeed there is no great occaſion to inſiſt on it; for it is ſelf-evident, that God will not exact that from us, which we have not.

Only we muſt obſerve, that this does not excuſe any man from Charity, though he have nothing to give; he muſt have a willing charitable mind to make him accepted; nor does it excuſe thoſe from Charity, who have but little to give, for they muſt give according to what they have: nor does it excuſe thoſe, who have nothing to give, from other acts of Charity, which require the giving nothing, and a great many ſuch acts of real charity there are, which poor people may do for each other, though they have not a penny in their purſe.

But it is time now to turn my Diſcourſe to the proper buſineſs of this great Solemnity. Publick Charities are always reckoned amongſt the greateſt Ornaments of any Country, and make up the moſt

lovely

lovely and charming part of their Characters: Stately and magnificent Buildings shew great Art, and great Riches, and a gallant and noble Genius, but great Charities have something divine, and strike the Mind with a Religious Veneration. There may be much more magnificent Shows than this Day's Procession, but none which affect wise and good Men with a sincerer Pleasure: To follow a great number of Orphans in the mean but decent Dress of Charity, singing the Praises of God, and praying for their Benefactors, is beyond all the *Roman* Triumphs, however adorned with a pompous Equipage, and great numbers of Royal Slaves.

These present us with nothing but the miserable Spectacles of Spoil and Rapine, the uncertain Changes and Vicissitudes of Fortune, the lamentable Fate of conquered Princes and People, and the Pride and Insolence of Conquerors; but here are the Triumphs of a generous Goodness and divine Charity, Triumphs without Blood and Spoil, without Slaves and Captives, unless redeem'd Slaves, rescued from the Jaws of Poverty, and all the Injuries and Miseries of a ruined Fortune: That to

me this great City, and this honourable Train, never looks greater than in this humble Pomp. A Pomp not for Vanity and Ostentation, but to endear and recommend Charity, by shewing the visible and blessed Fruits of it: and to the same End, I must give you an account of the present State of these publick Charities.

The Report was here Read.

THAT these are all great Charities I need not tell you; indeed all so great, that it is hard to know, to which to give the Preference, and what occasion all these Charities have of fresh, liberal and constant Supplies, *the Report* acquaints you.

But I cannot pass over one thing I observe in *this Report*, and which, I fear many necessitous People feel, that there have been no *Orphans* taken into *Christ's Hospital* this Year, nor, as I remember, for two Years last past. I do not mention this by way of Reflection, as any fault in the administration and government, but to put you in mind how much that excellent Foundation needs your Supply; and though I do

do not love to compare Charities, they being all of great use and necessity in their kind, yet I think this Foundation has something to plead for it self beyond any other.

A helpless Age, destitute of Friends, and all means of Support will plead for it self without saying any thing: it is a pitiable Sight to see poor innocent Children turned helpless into the wide World to starve, or beg, or steal, or to suffer all imaginable Difficulties and Necessities at home: without Education, without Government or Discipline, without being used to labour, or taught any honest way of living; which, as they grow up, improves into a Habit of Idleness, and that betrays them to all degrees and kinds of Wickedness, trains them up to the Gallows, or fills our other Hospitals with Vagrants and miserable People.

There is nothing, which all wise Common-wealths have been more concerned for, than the Education of Children, which proves a great Support, and gives great Ease and Security to any Government, by breeding up useful Members of it: So that

this is a Charity, which would in a great measure make some other Charities less needful; and it is certainly a greater Charity to prevent the Miseries of Mankind, than to relieve them.

This is a Charity wherein every Member of this great City, is most nearly concerned, because they and no others have a right to it. It is a provision for their Posterity, against all the sudden Strokes of Fortune, which no Man can be secured from; Here it is that Families, which are unexpectedly ruined by the uncertain Chances of Trade may be raised again by Charity; at least, by that Vertue and Industry, which their Education teaches them, and those fair Advantages, with which, according to their several Capacities, they are placed in the World; they have a new Opportunity given them of trying a better Fortune, or rather a more propitious Providence. So that every Citizen is concern'd to promote and enlarge this Charity; because no Man knows who shall want it, if not for his Children, yet for his Grand-children, or remoter Descendents;

nts; and possibly to Men, who are nsible of the uncertain Changes of e World, and have a religious Re- rence for the Divine Providence, it ould be no mean Argument to pro- ote this Charity, were Care taken at the Descendents of Benefactors, ever they should want this Cha- ty, should certainly have it.

It is certainly for the Honour of is great City to make the best rovision it can for the Children of nfortunate Citizens; and those on hom Providence has smil'd, while ey have seen their Neigbours ship- rack'd by such unavoidable Acci- ents as no Prudence or Conduct ould escape, cannot make a more roper Acknowledgment of the Di- ine Goodness than this.

I shall add but one thing more of his nature. This is the only Charity hich is most likely to raise a Fund of Charity: Among such great Numbers s have their Education in this place, here have been, and we may reaso- ably hope there always will be, not a few, who will raise their Fortunes n the World, and remember their Beginning was Charity. I'm sure such

Men ought to do so, and then such an Hospital as this, may help to support and enlarge it self, and in time raise new Hospitals, for new Colonies of Charity.

But while I plead for *Christ's Hospital*, I would not be thought to divert the whole current of Charity into this one Channel; as things now are, there is absolute necessity of other Charities: the Sick, Diseased, and Maimed, are great Objects of Charity, especially Soldiers and Sea-men, who venture their Lives, and lose their Health and their Limbs in the service of their Country, to defend our Fortunes, Liberties, Lives and Religion. There is none of us, but would think it a very poor Recompence for the loss of Health and Limbs, to be cured upon Charity; it is certainly the least that we can do for them; so very little, that if it be Charity to do it, it is Barbarity to deny it, and that is but a very small degree of Charity, which is but one remove from Barbarity it self.

As for other sick, and diseased, and lame People, who cannot be at the

he charge of a Cure, where Sickneſs, iſability, and Poverty meet, this akes them double Objects of Cha-ty, eſpecially as it often happens hen theſe Diſabilities fall upon the nduſtrious, who before ſupported hemſelves and their Families by ho-eſt Labours without Charity.

Nay, as for thoſe, who may be juſt-y thought the leaſt Objects of Cha-ity, the wicked and vicious, who eap the deſerved fruits of their own Wickedneſs, I am ſure, they are the Objects of the greateſt Pity, becauſe his Life will not end their Miſeries; nd if we can prolong their Lives here to ſave their Souls it will be Charity indeed, and what Effect the ſenſe of their Wickedneſs and Suffer-ings, and the Grace of God may have upon them, no Man can tell.

As for diſtracted Perſons, I believe, no Man, who conſiders what a Bleſ-ſing Reaſon and Underſtanding is, and what a Miſery the want of it is, can think of them without the moſt ſenſible Compaſſion: I think all other Evils whatſoever are to be pre-ferred before it, and therefore to re-ſtore them to their Senſes again,

which we hear by the Blessing of God is often done, or however to keep them from doing themselves, or others any Injury, and to preserve human Nature from that Contempt, which such publick Spectacles expose it to, is a very extraordinary Charity.

Now all this shews, that a charitable Man need not be at any great loss how to dispose of his Charity; here are too many very proper Objects of Charity, (if God so pleased) and we ought to be very thankful to God, that we our selves are not in the number; for *it is more blessed to give, than to receive.*

But then the great numbers of miserable People, who in several kinds want our Charity, is a very powerful Argument to greater Liberality and Bounty. For this I must add to what I have already said concerning the measures and proportions of Charity; that a truly charitable Mind will encrease its Proportions according to present Wants; will sometimes abridge it self even in the Conveniences of Life to supply great and pressing Necessities; for a great Love will not only

only spare, what it easily can, but when there is great reason for it, will deny it self to do good.

And here I intended to have represented to you our Apostles Arguments for a liberal and bountiful Charity; but I fear I have already too much trespassed; and where there is a willing Mind, so many and so great Objects of Charity, are themselves very pressing Arguments. And therefore as the Apostle endeavours to inspire his *Corinthians* with an holy Emulation of the Zeal and Forwardness of the Churches of *Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality*; so I shall only desire you to emulate the great Examples of past and present times, and that you would set as great Examples for times to come. If any thing deserves our Emulation, great and generous Charities do, which are a resemblance and imitation of the divine Goodness, than which nothing can more endear us to God or Man: We owe all our present Foundations to

to Royal Bounty and private Charities; and thanks be to God, our present Age, as bad as it is, is not without some great Examples; and though true Virtue is void of the Pride, and Vanity, and Envy, and Jealousies of Earthly Rivals, yet it fires at great Examples, and is ashamed to be out-done by Equals in love to God or Men; especially when the Honour of the Church, whereof they are Members, and the Religion, which they profess, is concerned.

It is well known how many pious and charitable Foundations are owing to Popish Superstition; they hoped to expiate their Sins, and to merit Heaven by their good Works, and in this hope, and this perswasion, they did a very great many. We understand better than to think of meriting any thing of God, much less of purchasing a liberty of sinning, by Acts of Charity; but if those great Rewards which are promised to Charity, and which we profess to believe, will not make us charitable, without the Opinion of Merit and Satisfaction: Charity is so great and excellent a Vertue, and so very useful to Mankind,

kind, that at least thus far Popery will be thought the better Religion; and therefore as the Apostle argues, *As ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also:* As we have a more Orthodox Faith, a clearer and a distincter Knowledge, and a purer Worship, than the Church of *Rome*, let us excel in Charity too, and convince the World, that to renounce Popery, is not to renounce good Works.

A SER-

SERMON X.

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord-Mayor and Court of Aldermen at *Guild-hall* Chappel, on *Sunday*, *April* 25. 1697.

Coloss. II. 8.

Beware lest any man spoil you through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the Rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

HAD St. *Paul* lived in our Age, it would have required little less than the Courage and Bravery of the Spirit of Martyrdom to have said this: And nothing but the Authority of so great an Apostle (which though some Men do not much value, yet they dare not openly despise) can skreen

skreen those who venture to say it after him.

What some Men call Philosophy and Reason (and there is nothing so foolish and absurd which some Men will not call so) is the only thing which those Men adore, who would either have no God, or a God and a Religion of their own making. And what Attempts some have made to undermine all Religion, and others to corrupt and transform the whole Frame of the Christian Religion, upon a Pretence of its contradicting Natural Reason and Philosophy, is too well known to need a Proof. That thus it was in his days, and that thus it was likely to be in future Ages, St. *Paul* was very sensible, when he gave this Caution to his *Colossians*; and I'm sure it is as proper a Caution for us, as ever it was for any Age since the writing of this Epistle; for this vain Pretence to Reason and Philosophy never more prevailed, and never did more mischief to the World.

It is an endless and fruitless Task to go about to confute all the absurd Hypotheses and wild inconsistent Reasonings wherewith Men abuse themselves

ves and others: The Experience of ſo any Ages wherein Philoſophy was in all Glory, and the ſeveral Sects diſputed d wrangled eternally, without ending y one Controverſie, gives no great En- uragement to hope for much this way; leaſt it can never be expected that dinary Chriſtians ſhould be better ſtructed and confirm'd in the Faith by hiloſophical Diſputes.

The Chriſtian Religion has from he very Beginning been corrupted by mixture of Philoſophy: Thus it was the Apoſtles days, and thus it has een more or leſs in all Ages of the Church to this day; and the directi- n the Apoſtle gives for the ſecurity f the Chriſtian Faith, is, Not to diſ- ute ſuch Matters, but to diſtinguiſh etween Philoſophical Diſputes, and Matters of Revelation; and to re- ject all the Pretences of Philoſophy, when it does or ſeems to contradict the Faith of Chriſt, or would make any corrupt Additions to it.

Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through Philoſophy and vain deceit; συλαγωγῶν, is to make a Prey, or to carry away as a Prey; that is, to ſeduce them from the

the Christian Faith, or from the Purity and Simplicity of it: *Through Philosophy and vain deceit*, that is, through the *vain deceit of Philosophy*, which cheats Men with a flattering but empty appearance; may unsettle weak Minds, but cannot lay a sure and solid foundation of Faith; may cheat Men out of their Faith, but when that is done, can give them nothing certain in the room of it: For it is but *after the traditions of men*, and *after the rudiments of this world*: Some of these Doctrines may possibly plead Prescription, as having been so long received, that no Man knows their Original; or if they have the Authority of some Great Name, yet it is but a Human Authority, and they are but *the traditions of men*; and of Men, who at best had no better Information than from the visible appearances of Nature, and their own imperfect Observations, and corrupt or defective Reasonings, *after the rudiments of this world*: And is this an Authority to oppose against the Faith of Christ, which both wants that Divine Confirmation which he gave to his Doctrines, and contradicts them?

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For they are *not after Chriſt*, neither taught by Chriſt, nor conſonant to what he taught.

Theſe Words might afford great Variety of Diſcourſe; but I ſhall confine my ſelf to what is moſt Uſefull, and reduce that into as narrow a compaſs as I can, by ſhewing,

I. What great need there is of this Caution, To *beware leſt any man ſpoil us through Philoſophy and vain deceit.*

II. What great reaſon we have to reject all theſe vain Pretences to Philoſophy, when they are oppoſed to the Authority of a Divine Revelation.

I. As for the firſt of theſe, Whoever conſiders what an Enemy theſe vain Pretences to Philoſophy have always been to Religion, will ſee need enough for this Caution.

True Reaſon, and the true Knowledge of Nature, which is true Philoſophy, would certainly direct us to the Acknowledgment and Worſhip of that Supreme Being who made the World: And yet we know, that there never was an Athieſt without ſome Pretence to Philo-

ſophy, and generally ſuch loud noiſy Pretences too, as make ignorant people think them very notable Philoſophers, and that tempts ſome vain empty Perſons to affect Atheiſm, that they may be thought Philoſophers.

That this is *vain deceit*, all Men muſt own, who believe there is a God: And if it be poſſible to pretend Philoſophy for Atheiſm it ſelf, it is no great wonder if it be made to patronize Infidelity and Hereſy: But this plainly ſhews of what dangerous Conſequence it is to admit Philoſophical Diſputes into Religion, which if at any time they may do any ſervice to Religion, much oftner greatly corrupt it, and ſhake the very Foundations of it; of which more anon.

At preſent I ſhall only ſhew you how the Matter of Fact ſtands; That moſt of the Diſputes in Religion are nothing elſe but the Diſputes of Philoſophy, and therefore according to the Apoſtolical Command, to be wholly flung out of Religion, and not ſuffered to affect our Faith one way or other. To be a Philoſopher and a Chriſtian, to Diſpute and to Believe, are two very different things: and yet it is very evident, that moſt of the

the Arguments againſt Revelation in general, and moſt of the Diſputes about the particular Doctrines of Chriſtianity, are no better than this *vain deceit of Philoſophy*; that were the Matters of Faith, and the Diſputes of Philoſophy truly diſtinguiſhed, this alone would be ſufficient to ſettle the Faith of Chriſtians, and reſtore Peace and Unity, at leaſt in the great Fundamentals of Religion, to the Chriſtian World.

1. As to begin with Revelation in general. The Books of *Moſes* are the moſt Ancient, and that conſidered, the beſt atteſted Hiſtory in the World; the whole Nation of the *Jews*, whoſe Hiſtory he writes, pay the greateſt veneration to him; and if we believe the Matters of Fact which he relates, he was certainly an Inſpired Man, who could neither deceive, nor be deceived. And it is impoſſible to have greater Evidence for the Truth and Authenticalneſs of any Writings, at ſuch a diſtance of time, than we have for the Writings of the *New Teſtament*; and indeed the Infidels of our Age have very little to ſay purely againſt the Credibility of the Hiſtory; and then one would think, that all their

other Objections ſhould come too late, unleſs they will juſtifie *Pharaoh* in disbelieving *Moſes*, and the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* in disbelieving our Saviour, after all the Miracles they did: For if they will disbelieve *Moſes* and Chriſt, though they have nothing material to object againſt the Truth of theſe Hiſtories; nothing, which they would allow to be good Objections againſt any other Hiſtory; they muſt by the ſame reaſon have disbelieved them, though they had ſeen them do all thoſe great Works which are reported of them in ſuch Credible Hiſtories. But whatever the Authority of theſe Books are, they think they may ſecurely reject them, if they contain any thing which contradicts their Reaſon and Philoſophy, and they find a great many ſuch things to quarrel with: They think *Moſes*'s Hiſtory of the Creation very unphiloſophical; That the Story of *Eve* and the Serpent is an incredible Fiction; That the Univerſal Deluge is abſolutely impoſſible, and irreconcileable with the Principles of Philoſophy: and it does not become Philoſophers to have recourſe to Miracles: That what we call Miracles are not the effects of a Divine Power, but may be reſolved into

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to Natural Cauſes; That Inſpiration and Propheſy is nothing but natural Enthuſiaſm, and all the Pretences to Revelation a Cheat and Impoſture; That Nature teaches us all that we need to know; That there is no other certain knowledge but this; That we are not bound to believe any thing which our own reaſon cannot graſp and comprehend, and therefore Revelation is perfectly uſeleſs; and God himſelf cannot oblige us to believe any thing which does not agree with the Reaſon of our own Minds, and the Philoſophy of Nature. Thoſe who underſtand the Myſtery of Modern Infidelity, know that theſe, and ſuch like, are the wiſe Reaſons for which they reject and ridicule all Revealed Religion, and endeavour to rob and ſpoil men of one of the greateſt Bleſſings in the World, a Divine Revelation. So that Infidelity is reſolved into theſe vain Pretences to Philoſophy, that Men will underſtand how to make, deſtroy, and govern the World better than God.

2. As theſe Men oppoſe Reaſon and Philoſophy to Revelation, ſo others either deny the fundamental Articles of Chriſtianity for the ſake of ſome Philoſophical Difficulties, or corrupt the Do-

ctrines of Chriſtianity by a mixture of Philoſophy. The Goſpel of our Saviour is the plaineſt Revelation of the Will of God that ever was made to the World; all its Doctrines are eaſily underſtood, without Art and Subtilty; and yet there is not a more nice, intricate, perplext thing in the World, than what ſome Men have made the Chriſtian Faith: All the Subtil Diſputes of Philoſophy are brought into the Church; and *Plato* and *Ariſtotle* are become as great Apoſtles, as St. *Peter*, or St. *Paul*: As to give ſome few Inſtances of it; for time will not permit me to diſcourſe it at large.

What are the *Arian*, *Socinian*, *Pelagian* Controverſies, but meer Philoſophical Diſputes, with which theſe Hereticks corrupted the Catholick Faith?

There is nothing more plain and expreſs in Scripture than the Faith of *Father*, *Son*, *and Holy Ghoſt*, *or the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity*; and that great Art and Subtilty which has been uſed, and to ſo little purpoſe, to pervert thoſe Texts of Scripture, wherein this Doctrine is contained, is an evident proof, That this is the plain, natural obvious ſenſe of thoſe Texts, ſince it requires

quires ſo much Art and Criticiſm to put any other ſenſe on them; and that will not do neither, till men are reſolved rather to make any thing of Scripture, than to find a *real Trinity* there. If then this Faith be ſo plainly contained in Scripture, what makes all this diſpute about it? What makes thoſe, who profeſs to believe the Scripture, ſo obſtinate againſt this Faith? Truly that which makes ſome men Infidels, makes others Hereticks, that is, a vain Pretence to Philoſophy.

The firſt Philoſophical Diſpute is about the Divine Unity: We all own with the Scripture, that there is but one God; but we ſay further, as the Scripture teaches us, *That there are Three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, each of which is true and perfect God.* This they ſay is a Contradiction; and if it be ſo, there is an end of this Faith, for both parts of a Contradiction can't be true: But to be Three and One upon different accounts, and in different ſenſes, is no Contradiction; for thus three may be One, and One Three; and this is all the Scripture teaches, or that we profeſs to believe, whatever the Myſtery of this Diſtinction

and Unity be: But this will not ſatisfie theſe Philoſophical Wits, unleſs they can comprehend how Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are really and diſtinctly Three, and eſſentially One, the manner of which the Scripture gives no account of, and therefore this is no diſpute in Faith but only in Philoſophy.

Another objection concerns the Divine Generation, how God can beget a Son of his own Subſtance; which the *Arians* thought inferred a Diviſion of the Divine Subſtance.

And a Third Objection concerns an Eternal Generation: how it is poſſible that the Father ſhould beget an Eternal Son; that the Son ſhould be begotten without any beginning of Being; and that the Father ſhould not be at leaſt ſome few moments before the Son, and conſequently the Son not Eternal. Now we all grant that we can give no Philoſophical account of this, no more than we can of the ſimple Divine Eſſence, or of Eternity it ſelf; but we may believe that God has an Eternal Son, as we do that there is an Eternal God, without knowing how any thing is Eternal: Theſe are Diſputes in Philoſophy, and ſuch as none but vain Men will diſpute about, as being

eing acknowledged above our Compre-
enſion,, and therefore no reaſonable
bjection againſt our Faith.

Thus as for the Doctrine of the Incar-
nation, nothing can be plainer in Scrip-
ure, than that *the Son of God was made*
man; That *the Word was made fleſh, and*
dwelt among us; That *God was manifeſt in*
the fleſh: And all the Diſputes about
his Article are purely Philoſophical:
Some men reject it, becauſe they cannot
underſtand how God and Man can be
united in one Perſon? Others confound
the Divine and Humane Nature as *Euty-*
ches did: or divide the Perſons, as *Neſtori-*
us did; both which indeed deſtroy the
Article of the Incarnation? for the Word
is not made Fleſh, unleſs the ſame Per-
ſon, who is God is Man too, and conti-
nues perfect God and perfect Man after
this Union: But all theſe Diſputes con-
cern the Philoſophy of the Union of the
Divine and Humane Nature in Chriſt;
and if we would ſeparate between Faith
and Philoſophy, ſuch Diſputes might
ſoon be ended.

Thus moſt of the difficulties in the
Pelagian and *Quinquarticular* Controver-
ſy, are ultimately reſolved into mere
Philoſophical Diſputes about Fate and
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Preſcience, Liberty and Neceſſity, and God's concourſe with Creatures, or the Powers of Nature and Grace: And would time permit, it were eaſy to ſhew this in moſt of the Controverſies of Religion, That it is not what God has revealed, and what he requires us to believe, but ſuch nice Philoſophical Queſtions as men raiſe about theſe matters, which occaſion all theſe Diſputes.

It has often been propoſed as a means of Union to ſilence all Diſputes, To confine our ſelves to Scripture-Words and Expreſſions, without determining the ſignification of them: But this would make only an Agreement in Words, not a Conſent in Opinions; nor could it ſecure the Peace of the Church, while all men knew, that under the ſame form of Words, they had very different and contrary Meanings, which would ſtill make them as much Hereticks to each other, as if their Words did as expreſly contradict each other, as their Faith. But would men reduce all their Diſputes to Scripture, and make that the only Rule of their Faith, without intermixing any Philoſophical Diſputes with it, this would be an infallible means of Union; for it is only this vain

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retence to Philoſophy, which raiſes all heſe Diſputes, and then tempts men to ervert the Scriptures to juſtify their hiloſophy.

In all theſe caſes we are concerned to nquire what the true ſenſe of the Article ; for this the Scripture teaches, and o far our Faith is concerned; and theſe re not only juſtifiable, but neceſſary Diſputes, if the true Faith be neceſſary: And uch were the Diſputes of the Catholick Fathers with the *Sabellian*, *Arian*, and *Photinian* Hereticks; Whether Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, were only three Names, or three Appearances or Manifeſtations of the ſame one ſingle Perſon, or any other Three, but three True, Proper, Coeternal, and Coequal Perſons: Or whether He, who is in Scripture called the Son of God, be a Creature, though the moſt Excellent Creature; or a Son, and God by Nature, truly begotten of his Father's Subſtance: Or whether Chriſt be God Incarnate, or a meer Man: And their ancient Creeds pretended to no more, than to teach what the Catholick Faith was, not to expound the Philoſophy of the Trinity and Incarnation. And thus far we muſt explain the Faith, as to know, and to let

let others know, what it is we believe; and if to assert the ancient Catholick Faith against old and New Heresies, should be called new Explications, we cannot help it; for we must explain what the Scripture teaches about these Articles, and how the Catholick Church always understood them: But that which we are to beware of, is, Not to mix Philosophy with our Faith, nor to admit of any meer Philosophical Objections against the Faith, nor to attempt any Explications of these Mysteries, beyond what the Scriptures, and the Faith and Practice of the Catholick Church will justify.

Indeed the Importunity of Hereticks did very often engage the Catholick Fathers in Philosophical Disputes; but this they did, not to explain the Christian Mysteries by Philosophy, but only to shew, that as incomprehensible as these Mysteries are, the Philosophy of Hereticks, and their Objections against these Articles, were very absurd: And such Disputes as these may somtimes be absolutely necessary, and of great use to shame these vain Pretences to Philosophy, while we do not put the Trial of our Faith upon this Issue.

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Secondly, Let us now conſider what
eat reaſon we have to reject all the
in Pretences to Reaſon and Philoſophy,
hen oppoſed to a Divine Revelation.
r that is all the Apoſtle intends in this
aution; not to diſcourage the uſe of
eaſon, or the ſtudy of Philoſophy,
hich are great Improvements, and a
lightful Entertainment of Humane
inds, and with a wiſe and prudent
onduct may be very ſerviceable to Re-
gion too; but we muſt not ſet up any
onclusions in Philoſophy againſt the
hriſtian Faith, nor corrupt the Faith
ith a mixture of Philoſophy, nor re-
ct any revealed Truths, for want of
atural Ideas to conceive them by.

To ſhorten this Diſcourſe as much as
can, I ſhall at preſent only ſhew you
hat reaſon we have to believe thoſe
octrines which are thought the moſt
yſterious and inconceivable, notwith-
tanding any Objections from natural
eaſon and Philoſophy againſt them.
And the account of this muſt be reſolved
nto the Nature, Uſe, and Authority of
Revelation; that Revelation as to ſuch
matters as are knowable only by Reve-
lation, muſt ſerve inſtead of Senſe, Na-
tural Ideas, and Natural Reaſon; that

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is, That we must believe things which we do not see, things which we have no Natural Notion or Conception of, things which are not evident to Natural Reason; for without this, there is little use of Faith, no Authority of pure Revelation.

It is true, the General Corruption of Mankind made it very necessary for God to revive the Laws of Nature, and to reinforce the observation of them by his own Authority and Command; but the proper work of Revelation is to discover such things to us as Nature cannot teach, of which we have no Natural Notion, nor any Natural Evidence; At least, thus it may be, if God knows more than Natural Reason teaches, or can comprehend; and thinks it fit to reveal such Supernatural Truths to us, when he sees it useful for Mankind.

Now if God ever does reveal such things to us, if we believe upon God's Authority (which is the strickt Notion of a Divine Faith,) we must believe without any Natural Evidence, meerly because God has revealed it; and then we must believe such things as are not evident to Sense and Reason; and then it can be no Objection against Revelation

n, nor againſt the belief of any ſuch pernatural Truths, that we have no atural Notion, nor Natural Evidence f them, that they are what we cannot onceive and comprehend.

To believe no farther than Natural eaſon can conceive and comprehend, is o reject the Divine Authority of Reve-tion, and to deſtroy the diſtinction be-ween Reaſon and Faith. He who will elieve no farther than Natural Reaſon pproves, believes his Reaſon, not the Revelation; and is in truth a Natural Philoſopher, not a Believer: He believes he Scriptures, as he would believe *Plato* nd *Tully*; not as inſpired Writings, but s agreeable to Reaſon and the reſult of wiſe and deep Thoughts; and this puts n end to all the Diſputes about Faith and Revelation at once: For what uſe is there of Faith? What matter whether the Scri-ptures be divinely inſpired or not; when we are no farther concerned with them than with other Humane Writings, to believe what they teach agreeable to our own Reaſon? Let theſe Men then either reject Faith and Scripture, or confeſs that Revelation, as to all ſupernatural Truths, muſt ſerve us inſtead of Senſe and Reaſon. I would gladly know of them

them, whether they would not believe such Supernatural Truths, as are not evident to Reason, were they sure that God had revealed them? I guess they will not be so hardy as to say, That they would not believe God himself, should he reveal such things as their Reason cannot comprehend; and if they would believe God in such matters, why will they not believe a Revelation which they themselves acknowledge to be Divine, in such matters? For is there any difference between believing God, and believing a Divine Revelation? If God does know, and can reveal such Mysteries, and is to be believed when he does reveal them, and such Doctrines are contained in an undoubted Revelation; then the unconceivableness of them can be no Argument against the Truth of the Revelation, or that sense of the words, which contains such Mysteries.

Let us then consider the natural consequence of this, which is of great moment in this dispute, *viz.* That we must allow of no Objections against Revealed Mysteries, which we will not allow to be good Objections against Sense and Reason; which is a necessary and unavoid-

voidable conſequence, if Revelation, with reſpect to ſupernatural Truths, ſtand in the place of Senſe and Reaſon.

Now no man queſtions the Truth of what he ſees and feels, or what he can prove to be true by plain and undeniable Reaſon, meerly becauſe there are unconceivable difficulties in it; as there are in every thing, even the moſt certain and familiar things in Nature: And if Revealed Truths are not more unconceivable than many natural objects of Senſe and Reaſon, why ſhould their being unconceivable be a greater objection againſt believing a Revelation, than it is againſt believing our Senſe and Reaſon in matters equally unconceivable? When God has revealed to us, That he has an Eternal and only begotten Son, though we cannot comprehend the Myſtery of the Eternal Generation, why ſhould we not as firmly believe it, as we do, that Man begets a Son in his own likeneſs, the Philoſophy of which we as little underſtand? Nor can we any more conceive the Union of the Soul and Body, than we do the Incarnation of the Son of God, or the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in one Perſon? And if we own the Authority of Revelation, why ſhould we

not as well believe what Revelation teaches, how unconceivable ſoever it be, as we do what Senſe and Reaſon teaches, though it be alike unconceivable.

All men are ſenſible, that it is very abſurd and fooliſh to deny the Being of any thing which they have certain evidence of, becauſe they cannot comprehend the Nature and Reaſons of it: The Man who roſe up and walked before the Philoſopher, who was diſputing ſubtilly againſt the poſſibility of Motion, put a ſcorn upon all his Arguments, by ſhewing him that he could move: And therefore we ſee, that all men believe their Senſes and Reaſon againſt all the difficulties in Nature, and will never be perſwaded, by the ſubtilleſt Diſputant, that that is not, which they certainly ſee and know to be. Now for the ſame reaſon, if Men will allow the Authority of Revelation, they muſt believe what is revealed, how unconceivable and incomprehenſible ſoever its nature be; for when we know what a thing is, (and this may be known by Revelation as well as by Senſe, as thoſe Men muſt confeſs, who acknowledge a Divine Revelation) no difficulties in conceiving it, muſt perſwade us to deny that it is.

This

This is very plain in it ſelf, though few men conſider it, That to disbelieve what is Revealed, for the ſake of any difficulties in underſtanding or conceiving it, is to reject the certainty of Revelation; For what other account can be given of that difference men make between the Evidence of Senſe and Reaſon, and of Revelation, but that they allow Senſe and Reaſon to be good and certain proofs of the Being of ſuch things as are evident to Senſe and Reaſon, how Myſterious ſoever their natures are; but that mere Revelation is no certain proof of the Being of any thing which is not evident alſo to Senſe and Reaſon, how plainly ſoever it be revealed; that is, that Revelation alone can prove nothing; for if Revelation it ſelf could prove the certainty of what is revealed, the difficulties in Nature and Philoſophy could no more diſprove a Revelation, than confute our Senſes. Now let any man judge, whether this be not unequal uſage, to expect more from Revelation, than they do from Senſe and Reaſon, and not to believe Revelation upon the ſame terms that they believe their Senſes.

Should Men reſolve to believe no-

thing which they ſee, till they could give a Philoſophical account of the Reaſons, and Cauſes, and Natures of all they ſee, as they refuſe to believe a Revelation any farther than they can conceive and comprehend the thing revealed, they muſt of neceſſity be as great Scepticks, as they are Infidels. For as for Contradictions, it is an eaſy matter to make or find ſeeming Contradictions in what we do not underſtand; for when we know not the Philoſophical Natures of things, nor how they act, and yet will be reaſoning and gueſſing at them, all our falſe gueſſes may be full of Contradictions and Impoſſibilities, becauſe we know not the true Myſtery of Nature. It is this vain humour of Criticizing upon Nature which makes ſo many Atheiſts. They go upon the ſame Principle with Infidels and Hereticks, To believe nothing which natural Reaſon cannot conceive and comprehend; now they cannot comprehend the Notion and Idea of a God, which they ſay, is made up of Contradictions and Impoſſibilities, and therefore they reject the Being of a God: They cannot conceive a Creating Power, which can give Being to that which had no Being before, which they

they think a plain Contradiction to make Something of Nothing; and therefore they reject the Creation of the World, and either aſſert the Eternity of the World, or at leaſt the Eternity of Matter: They can conceive no Subſtance but Matter and Body, and therefore reject the Notion of a Spirit, as Nonſenſe and Contradiction: They will allow nothing to be wiſely made, which they underſtand not the reaſon and uſes of, and therefore they fancy a great many botches and blunders in Nature, which cannot be the deſigns and contrivance of Wiſdom, but the effects of Chance; and then the conſequence is plain, That the World was made by Chance, not by a Wiſe Author.

Now, I confeſs, if this way of Reaſoning be allowed, it will be impoſſible to defend either Senſe, or Reaſon, or Revelation, againſt the Cavils of Atheiſts and Infidels; for there are unconceivable and incomprehenſible Secrets and Myſteries in them all; and if to conceive and comprehend the Natures of things, muſt be made the meaſure and ſtandard of true and falſe, we muſt deny our Senſes and Reaſon, as well as our Faith; and if we do and muſt believe our Senſe

and Reaſon beyond our Comprehenſion, why muſt we believe nothing that is Revealed any farther than we can conceive and comprehend the Nature and Reaſons of it?

The Sum is this: Humane Knowledge, whatever the means of knowing be, whether Senſe, or Reaſon, or Revelation, does not reach to the Philoſophical Cauſes and Natures of things, but only to their Being, and Natural Vertues and Powers; and as a Wiſe man, who knows the Meaſure of his underſtanding, expects no more from Senſe and Reaſon, than to know what things there are in the World, and what they are, as far as they fall under the notice of Senſe and Natural Reaſon; ſo we muſt expect no more from Revelation, than the knowledge of ſuch things as Senſe and Natural Reaſon cannot diſcover. But we muſt no more expect the Philoſophy of Supernatural Truths from Revelation, than we do the Myſteries of Nature from Senſe and Reaſon.

Now ſince Humane Knowledge is not a knowledge of the Myſterious Natures of things, but only to know what things there are, and what they are; there can be no contradiction between Senſe, and

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Reaſon, and Revelation; unleſs one denies what the other affirms, not that one teaches more than the other teaches, or that one cannot comprehend what the other teaches. Reaſon teaches more than Senſe teaches, or can comprehend; and Revelation teaches more than either Senſe or Natural Reaſon teaches, or can comprehend; but this is no contradiction, but only a ſubordination between theſe different kinds and degrees of Knowledge; but as for Unconceivableneſs and Incomprehenſibility, that is no argument againſt any thing; for Senſe and Natural Reaſon can no more comprehend their own Objects, than they do what is revealed: And it is manifeſt perverſeneſs to make that an objection againſt Revelation, which we will not allow to be an objection againſt Senſe and Reaſon.

This is ſufficient as to the reaſon of the thing; but as far as it is poſſible to remove mens Prejudices alſo againſt believing Myſteries, I ſhall briefly anſwer two very popular Objections.

1. It is thought very unnatural, that when God has made us reaſonable Creatures, and therefore made Natural Rea-

ſon to us the meaſure of Truth and Falſhood, he ſhould require us to believe without Reaſon; as we muſt do, if he reveals ſuch things to us as we know not, and cannot poſſibly know the reaſons of. If we muſt believe with our Underſtanding, how can we believe things which we cannot underſtand?

This were a reaſonable Objection, were it true; for we cannot believe what we have no knowledge nor underſtanding of; for Faith is Knowledge, though not Natural Knowledge.

But do we not underſtand what it is we believe? Do we not know what we mean, when we ſay, we believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt? Nay, do not our Adverſaries underſtand what we mean by it? How then come they to charge us with believing Contradictions and Impoſſibilities? For if they know not what we believe, they cannot know whether we believe Contradictions or not. And if we do underſtand what it is we believe, then we do not believe without underſtanding, which is abſolutely impoſſible, if we know what it is we believe.

And we know alſo why we believe: Our Faith is founded in Senſe and Reaſon,

ſon, and reſolved into the Authority of God, which is the higheſt and moſt infallible Reaſon. The Miracles which Chriſt and his Apoſtles wrought, were evident to Senſe, and owned by Reaſon to be the effects of a Divine Power; and the Anſwer the Blind man gave to the *Phariſees*, when Chriſt had opened his eyes, ſpeaks the true Senſe of Nature: *Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine Eyes. Now we know that God heareth not Sinners; but if any man be a Worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. Since the World began was it not heard that any man opened the Eyes of one that was born blind: If this man were not of God he could do nothing*, 9 John 30, 31, 32, 33. And all Mankind own, that the moſt abſolute Faith is due to God, and to thoſe who ſpeake from God; and this, as I take it, is to believe with Reaſon.

But ſtill we believe ſuch things, whoſe Natures we do not underſtand, and cannot account for by Natural Reaſon, and this is to believe without Reaſon. We believe, that God the Father hath an Eternal Son, and an Eternal Spirit; and that, Father, Son, and Holy

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ly Ghoſt, are but one Eternal God; but this is what Natural Reaſon cannot comprehend, nor give us any notion or conception of, how God can have an Eternal Son, and an Eternal Spirit, really diſtinct from himſelf, and yet with himſelf One Eternal and Infinite God: Reaſon can give no account of the Eternal Generation of the Son, nor of the Eternal Proceſſion of the Holy Spirit; and is not this to believe without Reaſon, which a reaſonable Creature ought not to do, and which we ought not to think, that God who made us reaſonable Creatures, expects from us.

And this I grant would be a material Objection, were Reaſon the Judge of the Nature and Philoſophy of things; and did Reaſon require us to believe nothing but what we underſtand and comprehend. But then we muſt no more believe Senſe and Reaſon, than Revelation; for we do not comprehend the Nature of any one thing in the World, how evident ſoever it is to Senſe and Reaſon, that there are ſuch things. Nature is as great a Myſtery as Revelation, and it is no greater affront to our Underſtandings, no more againſt Reaſon for God to reveal ſuch things to us

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s our Reaſon cannot comprehend, than is to make a whole World, which Reaſon cannot comprehend.

When we make it an Objection againſt ny thing, that it is without Reaſon, or s we apprehend, againſt Reaſon, and ontrary to Reaſon; we muſt firſt conider whether it be the proper object of Reaſon; otherwiſe it is no Objection; s it is no Objection againſt Sounds, hat we cannot ſee them; nor againſt Colours, that we cannot hear them; ecauſe Sounds are not the Objects of Sight, nor Colours of Hearing.

Now no man pretends, that the pure Natures and Eſſences of things, or their Eſſential Reaſons, Properties, Unions, Operations, are the Objects of Humane Reaſon; for no man living knows any thing about them.

And yet this is all the Incomprehenſibility men have to complain of in the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Incarnation; That they cannot comprehend, how God can beget an Eternal Son; nor how Three Divine Perſons ſhould be ſo united, as to be eſſentially One God; nor how the Divine and Humane Nature can be united into one Perſon, God-man: All which concern the Eſſence, and

and Eſſential Properties, Operations, Unions, Relations, of the Deity, which a modeſt man might allow to be incomprehenſible, if God be Infinite, though he could comprehend the Natures, Eſſences, and Eſſential Reaſons and Properties of Created Beings; but when all Created Nature is ſuch a Myſtery to us, that we know not the pure Nature and Eſſence of any one thing in the World, is it an affront to our Reaſon, that we cannot comprehend the Divine Nature?

Such Matters as theſe are neither without Reaſon, nor againſt Reaſon, nor contrary to Reaſon; becauſe Reaſon has nothing to do with them, and can take no cognizance of them: They belong not to Reaſon, but to that Infinite Mind, which comprehends it Self, and the Ideas of all poſſible Beings. A perfect comprehenſive Knowledge of Nature belongs only to the Maker of all things; for it is not only to know what things are, but how to make them; which would be a vain Curioſity, and uſeleſs Knowledge to thoſe, who have not a Making and Creating Power. This is to know things *à priori*, with an Intuitive Ideal Knowledge, which is

infinitely more ſuperiour to Reaſon, than Reaſon is to Senſe: And it is the affectation of this Intuitive making Knowledge, which makes ſome Men Atheiſts, and others Hereticks.

2*dly*. Another great Objection againſt ſuch a Revelation as contains matters which Natural Reaſon cannot comprehend, is, To what purpoſe ſuch a Revelation ſerves? What Merit there can be in believing ſuch Doctrines? And of what good uſe ſuch a Faith can be to us.

Now I confeſs I cannot think it meritorious merely to believe things which are incomprehenſible; or that God any more intended to puzzle our Faith with revealed Myſteries, than to puzzle our Reaſon in making a Myſterious World. Whether we receive our information from Senſe, or Natural Reaſon, or Revelation, it is certain we muſt believe Myſteries, if we believe any thing; for all things have ſomething myſterious and incomprehenſible in their natures; what natural Reaſon cannot account for, and what God never intended we ſhould underſtand: For God never intended to teach us how to make the World, nor how every Creature was made; and there-

therefore we cannot, and are not concerned to know the internal Frame and Conſtitution of Nature.

But though neither Natural nor Revealed Knowledge extends to the Reaſons and Cauſes of Nature, and of eſſential Properties and Operations; yet both natural and revealed Knowledge is of as much uſe to us, as if we did perfectly underſtand all the ſecret and incomprehenſible Myſteries of the nature of God, or of the Natures of Creatures. Both natural and revealed Knowledge are alike upon this account. That they only acquaint us what things are, and what ends they ſerve; and then we know what uſe to make of them, without underſtanding the ſecret Myſteries of Nature.

Is this World, or any thing in it, the leſs uſeful to us, becauſe we cannot conceive how God created all things of nothing? Or becauſe we do not underſtand the Nature of Matter, nor how the ſeveral parts of Matter came by their different Virtues and Qualities? Is Corn, or Fruit, or Herbs the leſs nouriſhing or refreſhing, becauſe we know not how they grow? Does it require any Philoſophy to know how to eat and drink

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d ſleep? Will not our Food nouriſh us, leſs we underſtand how it is concoct- and turned into Chile, and Blood, d Spirits? Nay, is it of no uſe to ow that God is an Eternal, Omnipo- nt, Omniſcient, Omnipreſent Being, leſs we can conceive how any Being n be Eternal without a Cauſe, and ithout a Beginning? Or can compre- end how he can do and know all things nd be preſent in all places at once, ithout Extenſion, and without Parts? Ve may make all the uſe that can be ade of this World, and of every thing it, without underſtanding the eſſential eaſons and Cauſes, or internal Nature f any thing; and we muſt do ſo, if we ill make any uſe of it; and we know od to all the ends and purpoſes for hich Creatures ought to know God, hough his Nature be incomprehenſi- ble,

And thus it is in matters of pure Re- velation, ſuch as the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Incarnation; how un- accountable ſoever the Myſtery of a Trinity in Unity, the Eternal Genera- tion, and the Incarnation of the Son of God be, yet it is the moſt uſeful Know- ledge in the World: Though we know not

not how the Eternal Father begat an Eternal Son of his own Substance, nor how this Eternal Son in time became Man; yet it is the most desireable Knowledge in the world to Sinners, to know, That God has an Eternal Son; and *that he so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son for the redemption of mankind, that whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life*; and that this Eternal Son of God became Man, lived a poor, necessitous, laborious Life, and died an accursed Death for the Salvation of Sinners; and to know, That the Holy Spirit, which proceeds from Father and Son, dwells in the Christian Church, and quickens and animates the whole Body of Christ. If this be true (as we must suppose in this Argument,) all Mankind must confess, that this is a very useful Knowledge; and never the less useful, because a Trinity in Unity, and the Eternal Generation, and the Incarnation of the Son of God, are great and unconceivable Mysteries. Could we give a Rational and Philosophical Account of the Eternal Generation, and of the Incarnation, we should know more than we now do; but Faith makes it as useful to

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all the purpoſes of Religion, as the moſt perfect intuitive Knowledge could do.

This is a ſufficient Anſwer to that Objection againſt the Uſefulneſs of ſuch Myſteries as have ſomething incomprehenſible and unconceivable in their Natures: Which is an equal Objection againſt all created Nature, which is but one great Myſtery; and yet the World is a very uſeful World, and we know in ſome good degree what uſe to make of it: And the Knowledge of thoſe Goſpel Myſteries which are the Subject of our preſent Diſpute, are manifeſtly of infinite uſe to us, if the certain knowledge of the Pardon of Sin, and Eternal Life, by the Obedience, and Sufferings, and Death, and Interceſſion of the Son of God Incarnate, be of any uſe; and therefore it became the wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to reveal theſe Myſteries of Salvation to us.

Eſpecially if we add to this, That the lapſed ſtate of Humane Nature makes Supernatural Knowledge neceſſary. Natural Knowledge we grant was ſufficient for a ſtate of Nature, though no man would have had reaſon to complain, had God in a ſtate of Innocence by a more familiar intercourſe with Man, or by

the frequent Converſation of Angels, improved his Knowledge beyond the meer attainments of his Natural Faculties; and it is not improbable, but this might have been; I am ſure there is an impatient thirſt after knowledge in Humane Nature, and ſuch a great curioſity for ſecret and hidden Myſteries, that it looks very unnatural for Men to complain, that God reveals more to them than Nature teaches.

But yet I ſay, Natural Knowledge muſt be allowed ſufficient to all the ends of Humane Life, while Man continued Innocent; for that is the Original ſtate of Human Nature, as all men muſt grant, who believe that Man was made by God.

But when man ſinned, he forfeited the Favour of God, and a natural Immortality; and whether he ſhould be reſtored or not, and by what means he ſhould be reſtored, depended wholly on the Sovereign Will and Pleaſure of God: And therefore the Light of Nature, though it could direct an Innocent Man how to Pleaſe and Worſhip God, and to preſerve himſelf Immortal, it could not teach Sinners how to make attonement for Sin, nor give them any certain hopes

hopes that God would forgive Sins, and beſtow immortal Life on them; which makes it neceſſary, that the Religion of a Sinner be a revealed Religion. And if God in infinite Goodneſs is not only pleaſed to reſtore Sinners to Grace and Favour, but to advance them to a ſupernatural ſtate of Perfection and Happineſs both of Soul and Body in the next World; this muſt be done by ſupernatural Means, and therefore requires a ſupernatural Knowledge; for the Light of Nature can neither raiſe us above Nature, nor diſcover ſupernatural Truths to us: and this makes it neceſſary to know and believe ſuch things, as we have no natural Notion or Idea of, *Such things as neither eye hath ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive.* If Nature can't ſave us, it can't diſcover to us the way of Salvation neither; and if we muſt be ſaved by a ſupernatural Grace and Power, it muſt be ſupernaturally revealed; and what is Supernatural, is the Object of *Faith*, not of natural *Knowledge*.

This ſeems to me to give a plain account, why God thinks fit to reveal ſuch Myſteries to us as Nature cannot teach, and as we have no natural Notion

of, becauſe our lapſed ſtate has made ſuch Supernatural Revelations neceſſary to the recovery of Mankind; and when we are fallen below the relief of Nature, and of Natural Knowledge, we ought to be very thankful to our good God for Supernatural Knowledge, and ſupernatural Means of Salvation.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, Three Perſons, one Eternal God, be Honour, Glory and Power, now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XI.

THE Folly and Unreaſonableneſs OF DEISM.

Preach'd before the King at *Hampton-Court*, *June* 16. 1700

John xiv. 1.

—*Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.*

I Shall not conſider theſe Words as they relate to what follows, but only obſerve in them, that our Saviour not only requires his Diſciples to believe in God, but that they ſhould

believe alſo in him, that is, to believe that he came from God, and hath revealed his Will to the World: And from hence I ſhall take occaſion to conſider the Caſe of *Deiſts*, who pretend toown, that there is a God, and to pay ſuch Worſhip to him, and to obey ſuch Laws, as meer Nature teaches, but reject all Revealed Religions, even the Goſpel of Chriſt it ſelf, as no better than Cheats and Impoſtors.

This Profeſſion of *Deiſm* is grown very faſhionable among our great Pretenders to Wit and *Philoſophy*; and I am very glad, that ſuch Men are aſhamed of the Name of *Atheiſts*, and hope, that a ſerious Conſideration of the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs of *Deiſm*; that is, to believe a God, and to deny all Revealed Religion, may diſpoſe them to an impartial Inquiry into the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Faith.

I. The Folly of *Deiſm.*

I will begin with this, to make Men conſider a little what they intend by it, or what wiſe End it will ſerve. Every one ſees, what Men intend by *Atheiſm*, to deliver themſelves from the Fears of inviſible

inviſible Powers, that they may follow their own Inclinations, and do what they like beſt themſelves, without any Awe of God, or Reproofs and Terrors of Conſcience, or the diſmal Apprehenſions of unknown and endleſs Puniſhments in the next World: And this is the wiſeſt Courſe Men can take, who reſolve to be wicked, that they may ſin with Eaſe and Pleaſure, without the bitter Allays of Shame and Fear.

But now if a *Deiſt* really is, what he pretends to be; that is, if he does really believe, that there is a God, and that the Soul is Immortal; and that Good Men ſhall be rewarded, and Bad Men puniſhed in the next World; he believes a great deal too much to ſin with Security. and a great deal too little to have any comfortable Hopes of a better Life. That this is certainly the moſt hopeleſs State that a Man can be in in this World, it has all the Reſtraints and Fears of Religion, but none of the Supports and Comforts of it: As to ſhew this briefly.

1. He who does heartily believe, that there is a God, who will puniſh Men for their Sins, not only in this World, but in the next, believes too much to

sin with Security, though he believes nothing at all of Revelation. For if Nature, as they grant, teaches Men, that there is a Holy and Just Governour of the World, who observes what we do, and will punish Wickedness, Natural Conscience also will accuse, and terrifie, and condemn wicked Men. Thus St. *Paul* assures us it was with the Heathen World, before they had any Revelation of God's Will. *For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves, which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Consciences also bearing witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another*, 2 Rom. 14, 15. And the same is attested by all the Heathen Orators, Philosophers, and Poets. And those natural Terrors of Conscience, and Fears of Vengeance, were in those Days, before Men had ever heard of the Gospel of our Saviour, so very unsupportable to bad Men, that they took Refuge in *Atheism* against them, as *Lucretius* does very honestly confess, and admires his Master *Epicurus*, for his brave and bold Attempt, in de-

delivering the World from the Fears of God and of Religion.

So that whoever believe a God, and live wickedly, muſt fear on, whether they believe the Goſpel or not, that *Deiſm* can do them no Service: And yet I am pretty confident, that the only thing which tempts ſo many Men to deny all Revealed Religion, is the fear of that terrible Vengeance which the Goſpel of our Saviour denounces againſt all wicked Men; *Lakes of Fire and Brimſtone, Blackneſs of Darkneſs; the Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels; the Worm that never dieth, and the Fire that never goeth out.* They are not willing to believe the Puniſhments of the Damned to be ſo terrible, nor ſo certain as the Goſpel repreſents them; and therefore prefer the Light of Nature, which gives a more uncertain Account of ſuch Matters, before the Goſpel Revelation. They can more eaſily bear, and more eaſily baffle the natural Fears, Miſgivings, and Jealouſies of a guilty Conſcience, than ſuch expreſs Declarations of God's Wrath againſt Sinners. The Holineſs and Juſtice of God make it very reaſonable and probable, that God ſhould puniſh Sinners. But the Goodneſs

ness of God gives great reason to hope too, that he will not be so severe as the Gospel threatens; much less, that he will make any of his Creatures, though Sinners, eternally miserable.

This is the true Mystery of Deism, when it signifies any more than concealed *Atheism*. No Man chuses *Deism*, as the more certain way of Salvation; but that which makes them so fond of it, and so averse to believe any more than the Light of Nature teaches, is, that they are not so certain to be damned.

But this is a very vain Design.

1. For can there be greater Folly than to pretend to believe the Punishments of bad Men in the next World, and yet to reject the Gospel, for fear of being too certain of them? Would not a wise Man in a Matter of such Consequence as this, be glad to know certainly what he must trust to, and to know the very worst of his Case?

The meaning of this indeed is very plain, and a very wise Design it is: they like the uncertain Fears of Nature much better than the certainty of the Gospel-Revelation, because they are resolved to sin on, and to venture the Punishments of the other World, which

which they can the more ſafely and honourably do, the leſs certain they are.

But is it either ſafe or honourable to venture future Miſeries? Would not a wiſe Man in a Matter of ſuch vaſt Conſequence chuſe to be ſafe? And though we reject the plain and expreſs Revelations of the Goſpel, if it be ſtill reaſonable to fear (as it muſt be, if Nature teaches, that God will puniſh Sinners) it cannot be ſafe to venture. Men who pretend to live by meer natural Reaſon, ought to look upon reaſonable Fears, as certain Rules to live by; for they have no other: And [illegible]n they gain nothing by rejecting [illegible]e certain Revelation; for they muſt fear on, and if they act reaſonably, muſt live as if their Fears were certain; and if they don't, though they reject Revelation, Natural Conſcience will make them fear and tremble too, whether they will or no. Tho' the Light of Nature does not give us ſuch certain Evidence of future Puniſhments as the Goſpel does, yet the natural Fears of a guilty Conſcience will as certainly torment us, as if we did believe the Goſpel: For a reaſonable Fear has a certain

certain Torment proportion'd to the Object of our Fears. Men do not fear meerly according to the Evidence they have for things, but according to the Concernment of the things they fear: And when eternal Miseries are the Objects of our Fear, a little Evidence will raise a terrible and furious Passion.

2. And though the Light of Nature does not so particularly acquaint us what the Punishments of the Damned are, nor how long they shall continue, as the Gospel does, yet this gives very little relief to a Deist: Tho' he will not believe the Scripture Account of Eternal Punishments; yet when his Fears are awakened, he can set no bounds or measures to them. The fear of unknown Miseries paints the Fancy with as frightful Representations, as the Gospel makes; for when we know not particularly what to fear, we always fear the worst that can be. This gave occasion to those Poetical Descriptions of *Styx* and *Acheron*, and the *Infernal Judges* and *Furies*, and those various Torments inflicted on Tyrants and other bad Men; and though they did not positively assert the Eternity of Punishments,

niſhments, yet they ſet no Bounds to them, but what the Principles of their Philoſophy inferred, in the various Tranſmigrations of Souls, or Periodical Revolutions, or the final Conflagration, which they thought their Gods themſelves could not eſcape. The Light of Nature preſcribes no Meaſures nor Limits to the Puniſhment of Sinners, and therefore a *Deiſt* can never prove, that they are not ſo great and ſo endleſs as the Goſpel deſcribes them; and if Reaſon cannot prove them to be leſs, guilty Fears will never make them leſs; eſpecially ſince the Goſpel is now publiſhed to the World, and thoſe who will not believe it, yet know what it ſays; and though they can bribe their Reaſon not to believe it, their Fears will be very apt to believe the worſt.

And now I would deſire theſe Men, who think themſelves ſo ſafe, if they can laugh the Goſpel, and all Revealed Religion out of the World, ſeriouſly to conſider, what they intend, or what they gain by it. If they do ſincerely believe, that there is a Righteous God, who will judge the World, and puniſh wicked Men, they are as much obliged to live a Holy and Vertuous Life, as a Chriſtian

Christian is; and if they do not, they are exposed to the same Rebukes, and Lashes of Conscience, and guilty Fears. That they have not so much certainty of this by the Light of Nature, as the Gospel gives us, makes no difference, if they fear it; their Fears will be as great and outragious, the Sting of Sin will be as sharp; but their Strength to resist the flattering Temptations of the World will not be so great: The more certain our Faith is, the more easie and secure our Victory will be; and to weaken our Evidence, is only to make our selves an easier Prey. And if this be what they aim at, to sin more easily and securely at present, and by degrees to conquer their Natural Fears, which they can more easily do, and so make *Deism* an easie Step to *Atheism*, I confess they are in a hopeful way: But while they believe a God, and the Rewards and Punishments of the next Life, it will do them no Service to reject the Gospel; they may weaken their Faith by it, but not cure, but encrease their Fears.

Secondly, As a *Deist*, if he be true to the Principles he professes, the belief of a God, and of the Rewards and Punish-

niſhments of the next life, gains no-
ing at all by rejecting the Goſpel
evelation, ſo he loſes all the Sup-
orts and Comforts of the Goſpel.
xcepting thoſe terrible theatnings,
hich the Goſpel denounces againſt
penitent Sinners, every thing elſe
it is a true εὐαγγέλιον glad tidings
great joy to Mankind: It gives us
many ſignal Tokens and Pledges of
e divine favour, and ſuch expreſſe
romiſes of Gods care of good Men
this World, and of the glorious re-
ards of the next, as meer nature at
oſt affords but very imperfect con-
ctures of; that the *Deiſt*, if he have
ny generous hopes of immortality
eft, ſhould be glad to have ſome bet-
er aſſurance of immortal happineſs,
han nature gives, and can think it no
dvantage, that the Puniſhments of the
next life are uncertain, when the Re-
wards of it are as uncertain too, if
we will allow no other Evidence but
the Light of Nature. But I ſhall con-
fine my ſelf at preſent but to one
thing, which all Mankind are equally
concerned in, and which we can never
be aſſured of, but by Revelation, and
that is, the certain pardon and forgiveneſs
of Sin.

If

If God be holy and just, a Sinner (as all Mankind are) must be punished, except he be pardoned; and therefore can have no good hopes towards God, till he is assured of his pardon.

Now the meer light of nature gives us no absolute assurance of the pardon of Sin, no, not so much as it does, that God will punish *Sinners*, and therefore a *Deist*, who rejects the Gospel Revelation, cannot possibly be so certain, that his Sins shall be pardoned, as that he shall be punished for them.

The Holiness and Justice of God makes him an irreconcileable Enemy to all Sin, and the only refuge Sinners have, is in the Goodness of God; but Goodness does not so necessarily prove, that God will forgive Sin, as Justice does, that he will punish it. For Goodness in its own nature must give place to Justice, that is, Goodness cannot pardon, while it is unjust to pardon; for an unjust Goodness is no divine Perfection.

So that the Goodness of God, how great soever we conceive it to be, (and we cannot conceive it greater than it is) does not necessarily prove, that God must or will pardon Sinners, but only

only that he will pardon Sinners when it is wiſe and juſt to do ſo: but who can tell, when God will think it wiſe and juſt to do ſo, without a Revelation? or who can tell, what it is, that makes it wiſe and juſt for a good God to forgive Sins? A good Man does not always think himſelf bound to forgive thoſe Perſonal injuries and affronts, which are offered him, much leſs is a kind and merciful Prince, who is entruſted with the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, and the Sacred Authority of Government, bound to forgive every Malefactor out of pure good nature, which would ſoon diſſolve Government, and make Authority contemptible; and if we conſider God as the Supreme Governour of the World, it will ſatisfy us, that to forgive Sins is not the immediate effect of goodneſs, but muſt be tempered and accommodated to the Juſtice and Wiſdom of Government, which we underſtand ſo little of, that we can never certainly learn from the meer light of nature, when and upon what terms God will forgive Sin.

The general hope and expectation of Mankind is, that God will forgive all humble penitent Sinners, and yet I

cannot find, that any Man ever thought, that meer Repentance was sufficient to obtain our Pardon; for all Religions had some instituted Rites to appease their Gods, which seems to argue, that Natural Sense they all had, that some Atonement and Expiation as well as Repentance, was necessary to pardon.

Nor can Reason prove the contrary. Repentance renders Men fit objects of mercy, when no other reason hinders; but the reasons of Government may supersede the Inclinations to shew mercy. How often does a merciful Prince hang a penitent Malefactor without any blemish to the Mercy of his Government; and if good Men and good Princes are not always bound to forgive Penitents, then Repentance it self alone cannot entitle us to Mercy.

So that we can have no Security of the pardon of our Sins but by the Gospel of Christ, wherein God has expresly promised the remission of Sins to all true Penitents in the Name, and through the Merits and Mediation of Christ.

Good God! what a consolation is this to Sinners! who would be without the certain hopes of Forgiveness for

for all the World. How terrible is it to believe that there is a juſt God, who will puniſh Sinners, without knowing or believing a Saviour! did theſe Men duly conſider Things, they would think *Deiſm* to be the moſt dangerous State in the World, which has no Covenant, no Promiſe, no Prieſt, no Sacrifice; which might be the Religion of the State of Innocence, but is no Religion for Sinners.

Secondly, Let us now conſider the unreaſonableneſs of *Deiſm*, and how inconſiſtent it is with it ſelf: For to deny all Divine Revelation, does extreamly weaken the belief of a God; and to acknowledge the Being of a God, makes it highly reaſonable to believe a Revelation.

Firſt, That to deny all Divine Revelation does extreamly weaken the belief of a God.

A *Deiſt* indeed has this viſible World for the Proof of a God, as St. *Paul* argues; The inviſible things from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the Things that are made, *even his Eternal Power and Godhead*, Rom. 1. 20. And this I grant is a very good Argument,

but loses very much of its Strength in the Mouth of a *Deist*. For though it be highly reasonable to think, that the World was made by that Supreme and Sovereign Being, whom we call God, yet had we no other notice of the being of a God, but from this visible Creation, had there never been any Commerce or Intercourse between God and Men, had he never since the making of the World, given any Signs or Tokens of his Power and Presence, it would have been a very strong Præsumption, that there is no God, notwithstanding all the Arguments from the Frame of this visible World, that there is one: For it seems as unreasonable to think that there should be a God in the World, and Mankind hear nothing of him, see no visible Marks of his Care and Providence, in matters of the greatest Consequence (as the Worship and Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mens Souls certainly are) that they should receive no Notices of his Will, what Homage he expects from them, and what he will accept, that there should be no Communication between Reasonable Beings and the Supreme Mind, as it is to think,

that

that the World could be made without a God. For what end did God make reaſonable Creatures, but to make himſelf known to them, which is the higheſt happineſs and Perfection of Reaſonable Beings; and can we then imagine, that when God had made the World, and made Man, he ſhould withdraw himſelf into Silence and Obſcurity, and take no farther notice of Mankind, nor make any other Diſcoveries of himſelf to them, than what they can imperfectly ſpell out from the viſible Creation.

And on the other hand, though we muſt not urge the Authority of Revelation to prove a God, which would be to beg the Queſtion, yet the being of a Revelation we may; for whatever proves a Divine Revelation proves a God.

The wiſeſt and acuteſt Philoſophers among the Heathens thought this the beſt and moſt ſenſible Proof of a God.

Balbus the *Stoick*, having begun his Proof of the Being of a God from this viſible Creation, and the univerſal Conſent of Mankind in this Belief, he reſolves the Firmneſs and Stability Cicero de natura Deorum.

of this Perswasion into those visible Signs which their Gods oftentimes gave of their own Power and Presence; *Quòd presentiam sæpe Divi suam declarant*, And the Argument is certainly a very good one, though the Particular Instances he gives of it, may be vain and fictitious, and want sufficient attestation to gain belief: But had *Balbus* instead of the Apparitions of *Castor* and *Pollux*, and their ridiculous Rites of Divination, seen the Miracles of *Moses* and of *Christ*, the familiar Conversation of God with *Abraham* and *Moses*, the terrible Appearance of Mount *Sinai* when God delivered the Law in an audible Voice, and the infallible Accomplishment of Prophesies, that is, had his Proofs of a Divine Power and Presence been as undeniable, as his reasoning from such Divine Appearances to the Being of a God, is unanswerable, all the Wit and Sophistry in the World could never have evaded this Argument; for it would be impossible to perswade Men there is no God, when they do little less than see him in such present and sensible Effects, as can have no other Cause but a God. However thus much we learn from this dispute, that according

ding to the Senſe of the wiſeſt Men, ſuch viſible Effects of a Divine Power and Preſence are the moſt irreſiſtible Argument for the Being of God; that the wiſeſt Men did believe, that if there is a God, he would give ſome undeniable Proofs of his own Being in the Acts of Government and Providence, as well as of Creation: And that if there never had been any ſuch ſenſible Appearances of ſuch a Divine Power and Preſence, it would at leaſt have rendred the Being of God very doubtfull.

This ſhould make all thoſe who heartily believe a God, to think and ſpeak more honourably of Revelation; for the Belief of a God and of Revelation will ſtand and fall together; that a *Deiſt*, who ridicules all Revelation, takes a very ill Courſe to perſwade the World, that he believes a God.

Secondly, The unreaſonableneſs of *Deiſm* will further appear, if we conſider, that to acknowledge the Being of a God makes it highly reaſonable to believe a Revelation. I do not ſay, that to believe a God obliges us to believe every pretended Revelation:

for the truth of any particular Revelation depends on those peculiar Marks of Divinity and Credibility, which it bears on it: but whoever beleives, that there is a God, cannot think it incredible, that God should reveal himself and his Will to Mankind; nay will see great reason to believe, that he has done so, as the State of the World in the different Ages and Dispensations of it, did require, and would admit. For,

First, No Man, who believes, that there is a God, can question, whether God can, if he so pleases, make a more perfect manifestation of himself, and his Will, to Mankind, than he has done by the Works of Nature: for what can't he do, who made the World, and is infinite in Wisdom and Power? as to consider particularly some of those ways, whereby God is supposed to reveal himself to Mankind.

God is a pure and infinite Mind, who cannot be seen by Mortal Eyes, and yet will any Man say, that God cannot by some visible Appearances convince Men of his immediate Presence beyond all possibility of Doubt? that

that he cannot either with or without ſuch viſible Appearances, ſpeak to them, and talk as familiarly with them, as one Man converſes with another? And then whatever Truth there be in the Story, which is another Enquiry, there is nothing in its own Nature incredible in thoſe Relations we have of God's appearing to *Adam*, and converſing with him in Paradiſe; of his appearing to *Abraham* and *Jacob*, who ſaw God face to face, *Gen.* 32. 30. Of his ſpeaking to *Moſes* face to face, as a Man talketh with his Friend, *Exod.* 33. 11.

Cannot God, who formed our Minds, and knows all the Springs of Thoughts, draw ſuch clear and bright Scenes and Pictures of things on our Fancy and Imagination, whether ſleeping or waking, as ſhall need no other proof of their Divinity but themſelves? As Light is known by it ſelf, and the firſt Principles and Maxims of Reaſon by their own Evidence.

Cannot the Son of God, who made the World, and made Man, if he ſo pleaſes, cloath himſelf with Humane Nature, and appear and converſe in the World, as a Man, and familiarly inſtruct Mankind

kind in the Will of God, and the Way to Heaven.

There is no question then, but God can, if he pleases, inspire Men with the Knowledge of his Will, either by Dreams and Visions, or by an audible Voice, and a familiar Conversation, or by an immediate Impression upon the higher Faculties of Reason and Understanding; so that if there be a God, there may be Prophets inspired by God to reveal his Will to Men: And therefore the Pretences to Prophesie, must not be laugh'd out of the World, but examined: The thing is not incredible, because it is what God can do; but the Prophet must be tried, because there may be Cheats and Impostures.

Now the trial of a Prophet, whether he come from God, is by such Works, as no Man can do except God be with him; that is, in short, by what we call Miracles, and foretelling things to come. And here again, he who believes that there is a God, cannot think either Miracles, or a Prediction of future Events impossible: For what cannot that God do and know, whose Power and Knowledge are infinite? What cannot that God do, who made the World? Is it such a Difficulty to him,

him, who framed our Bodies out of the Duſt, to give Health to the Sick, or Sight to the Blind, to make the Deaf to Hear, and the Lame to Walk, and to Raiſe the Dead? We all know, this is above Humane Power; and therefore if ſuch things be done, they muſt be done by the Power of God; and we know, that God can do them; and therefore Miracles are not impoſſible or incredible to him who believes a God.

Thus far the *Deiſt* muſt agree with me, unleſs he have a very mean Opinion of his God: For a God who cannot reveal his Will to Mankind, who cannot inſpire Prophets, nor work Miracles, nor foretel things to come, is no God, has not the Wiſdom and the Power of a God. Now this is a great Point gained; for if God can do all this, then there is no Objection againſt the Nature of the thing; and the only Diſpute is about Matter of Fact, whether God have revealed his Will to Mankind; whether there ever were ſuch inſpired Men ſent by God to inſtruct the World; whether there ever were any true Miracles wrought, or any certain Predictions of things to come; and when Men are ſatisfied, that ſuch things

things may be, as they certainly may be, if there be a God, it will dispose them to a more modest and impartial Examination of such Matters, and not suffer them to despise Revealed Religion at all adventures: For in Matters, especially of such vast moment, no wise Man will reject and scorn what may be true, till he can prove it to be false.

2. Since then we must confess, that it is possible that God should reveal his Will to Mankind, let us consider, which is most probable, which is most agreeable to those Notions we have of God; that he should, or should not, make such a Revelation of his Will.

Now if we may judge of this by the general Sense of Mankind, there was not a Man in the World in former Ages, who believed a God, but did believe also some kind of Commerce and Communication between God and Men. This was the Foundation of all their Religious Rites and Ceremonies, which every Nation pretended to receive from their Gods.

This gave Birth to all their Superstitious Arts of Divination, that they believed their Gods had a perpetual Intercourse with Men, and by various Means

gave

ave them notice of things to come: nd the *Stoick* in *Tully* thought, That he Acknowledgment of a God did as eceſſarily infer Divination, as Divina- on did prove the Being of a God. *Ego im ſic exiſtimo, ſi ſint ea genera divi- andi vera, de quibus accepimus, quæq; co- imus eſſe Deos: viciſſimq; ſi Dii ſint, eſſe ui divinent.*

Is it poſſible, as I obſerved before, to magine, that God ſhould make reaſo- able Creatures, who are made to know im, and to be happy in the Knowledge, nd Love, and Admiration of him, and withdraw himſelf from them, without giving them any viſible Tokens of his Preſence, or any other View of his Glo- ry then in the weak and glimmering Reflections of his Works. Had Man preſerved the Innocence and Purity of his Nature, (for whether we believe the Hiſtory of *Moſes* or not, if we believe, that God made Man, we muſt believe, that he made him Holy) he had been fit for the Preſence and Converſation of God, as Angels, and Holy and Pure Spirits are; and in this State there can be no doubt, but God would have ſhewn himſelf and his Glory to Man in ſome Meaſure and Proportion, as he does to the

the Angels in Heaven, as the History of *Moses* assures us, that God did to *Adam* in Paradise. So that Man was made, if I may so speak with Reverence, for the Conversation of God, which pious and devout Souls recover in some measure on Earth, and which we all hope perfectly to enjoy in Heaven.

Sin indeed, as necessarily it must, has made a greater distance between God and Man; but if we must live in the other World, and be happy or miserable there (*as the Deist professes to believe*) if God still exercises any Care and Providence over Mankind, it seems absolutely necessary, that he should give some sensible Tokens of his own Being and Presence, and instruct them more perfectly in his own Nature and Will, than the Light of Nature teaches. For how much soever Men may magnifie the Light of Nature, it is certain the State of the World was very ignorant and corrupt, and Mankind knew little of God, beyond a general Perswasion, that there was such a Being, and therefore worshipped a Multiplicity of Gods, and any thing for God, and that with such ridiculous and barbarous

Rites,

tes, as were a Reproach to the Na-
re both of God and Man. And can
y Man who believes a Divine Provi-
nce, think that God takes no care of
s own Glory and Worſhip, nor of the
uls of Men? And it is certain he has
ken none, if he have not revealed
mſelf and his Will to the World,

Eſpecially when we conſider, that in
oſe dark Times of Paganiſm, the De-
l and Evil Spirits had every where
eir Temples, and Altars, and Prieſts,
nd Sacrifices, frequently appeared to
eir Votaries in viſible Shapes, and in-
ituted their own Rites of Worſhip, and
ave forth their Oracles and Reſponſes,
nd by their various Arts of Divinati-
n, gave them notice of many Events.
or though theſe were Cheats and Im-
oſtures, they were not all the Cheats
f Prieſts, but of Evil Spirits, who im-
oſed both upon Prieſts and People, and
y theſe Arts begot in them a great O-
inion of their own Divinity, as we
uſt confeſs; unleſs we will deny the
Credit of all Hiſtories. And when this,
y the ſecret and hidden Counſels of
God, was the miſerable and degenerate
State of Mankind; can we think, that
God ſhould leave himſelf without any

other

other Witness than the Light of Nature; should give no Demonstrations of a Power superior to all these vulgar Deities, nor give Men any certain Notices of his Will, no Rules of Conversation or Worship.

It is certain in Matter of Fact, that all the Reformation which has been made in Mens Faith, and Worship, and Manners, is owing to the Jewish and Christian Religion: This put a stop to their absurd Idolatries, and restored the Worship of the One Supreme God in the World; which is so wonderful a Change, as could not have been wrought without some visible and irresistible Proofs of Divinity.

This is sufficient to shew, how unreasonable it is in those Men who believe a God, to deny all Revelation. For it is certain, that God can reveal Himself and his Will to Mankind, if he pleases; and that the Nature and Providence of God, and the State of the World, makes it highly reasonable to think he has done it. The Design of all which is no more but this, to remove Mens Prejudices against the very Notion of a Revealed Religion: For were this effectually done, they would soon discover the most unquestio-

queſtionable Characters of Divinity in the Goſpel of our Saviour. I am ſure, if we do believe a God, and another World, nothing can be ſo deſirable as a more explicite and perfect Account of the Will of God, and the Way to Heaven, than meer Nature can give us.

What Impreſſion this may make upon profeſs'd *Deiſts* I cannot tell; they have ſo uſed themſelves to laugh at every thing that is ſerious, and to confute the wiſeſt Arguments with bold and profane Jeſts, that little Good can be expected from them: But I hope this may caution thoſe, who are not yet infected, and make the Name of a *Deiſt* in a Chriſtian Nation, as contemptible as the Name of an *Atheiſt*, they are both owing to the ſame Cauſe; they live much alike; they are equal Enemies to Chriſtianity, and equally dangerous to any Government, where they themſelves are not uppermoſt. It is a great Reproach to a Chriſtian Nation, where ſuch Doctrines are publickly owned and profeſs'd, and ſuch Perſons courted and flattered as the moſt refined Philoſophical Wits. I pray God this Nation do not find the miſchievous Effects of it both in Church and State. Government can never be

long ſecure without the Sacred Authority of Religion; and deſtroy Revealed Religion, and we ſhall quickly have none, as is too viſible in the Lives of *Deiſts*. I'm ſure, it is a vain thing to talk of a Reformation of Manners, while ſuch Men are ſuffered to poiſon the very Fountains, to undermine all Religion, and to root up the very Foundations of Piety and Vertue. I do not love to propheſie ill Things; but that Nation cannot reaſonably expect to receive Good from God, which is ſo unconcerned for his Glory and Worſhip; it being the ſtanding Rule of his Government. *He that honoureth me, I will honour; but thoſe which deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed.*

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for evermore. Amen.

SER-

SERMON XII.

Preach'd on *September* 2. 1699. Being the Fast for the Fire of *London*, at the Cathedeal Church of St. *Paul*'s, before the Right Honourable the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of *London*.

Micah vi. 9.

The Lord's Voice crieth unto the City, and the Man of Wiſdom ſhall ſee thy Name. Hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it.

WHen the State of this World is Happy and Proſperous, it is no wonder to ſee Men indulge themſelves in Eaſe and Luxury, forget God, or grow careleſs and formal

mal in Religion. For though it might reaſonably be expected that happy Creatures, who rejoice in the Bleſſings of Heaven, ſhould be very devout Worſhippers of that God from whoſe Bounty and Goodneſs they receive all; yet Humane Nature in this degenerate State is very fond of ſenſual Pleaſures: And when an eaſie and plentiful Fortune puts it into Mens Power to enjoy as much of this World as they will, there are but very few who can ſet Bounds to their Enjoyments, and taſte the Pleaſures of this Life, without taking large and intoxicating Draughts of it; and this ſenſualizes Mens Minds; and *a carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God*; ſaith unto God, *Depart from us, for we deſire not the Knowledge of thy Ways.*

Never any People had more ſenſible Demonſtrations of the Power and Preſence of God amongſt them, and his particular Care of them, than the *Iſraelites* had; and yet *Moſes* tells us in his Prophetick Hymn, *Jeſurun waxed fat, and kicked; thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with Fatneſs; then he forſook God which made him, and lightly eſteemed the Rock of his Salvation*, Deut. 32. 15. And thus

thus God complains, Iſa. 1. 2, 3. *Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth, for the Lord hath ſpoken; I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have rebelled againſt me. The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſter's Crib; but Iſrael doth not know, my People doth not conſider.* And as much as we may deſpiſe and abhor the Ingratitude of the *Jews*, this is the general State of Mankind; and we may find too many Examples of it in all Times and Nations.

But it ſeems much more unaccountable, *when the Judgments of God are abroad in the World, that the Inhabitants thereof ſhould not learn Righteouſneſs:* Becauſe Judgments are apt to awaken Men, and make them conſider. When God ſpeaks in Thunder and Lightning, thoſe muſt be deaf indeed, who will not hear. This is the merciful Deſign of Providence in ſending ſuch terrible Judgments on the World, to make Men conſider their Ways and their Doings, and to convince them that there is a God that judgeth in the Earth. For Judgments have a Voice, had we but Ears to hear: They proclaim the Power and the Majeſty of God; a terrible

Majeſty, and irreſiſtible Power; they ſcourge and they threaten Sinners, and call for Weeping, and Mourning, and Faſting: And how unthankful ſoever the *Jews* were to God for his great Mercies and Deliverances, yet they were not ſo inſenſible of his Judgments? *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and returned and enquired early after God, and remembred that God was their Rock; and the High God their Redeemer,* Pſalm 78. 34, 35.

This we are exhorted to in my Text, *To hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it*: To conſider for what reaſons thoſe Evils which we at any time ſuffer, are come upon us, and what God intends by the Rod; which is the only way to grow better by our Afflictions, and to prevail with God in great Pity and Compaſſion to remove them.

But this is the great difficulty; Who ſhall reveal this Secret to us? How ſhall we diſtinguiſh between the Corrections of God, and the Wickedneſs of Men? How ſhall we underſtand the Language of the Rod, and to whom it ſpeaks; for what Sins it ſtrikes, and who are thoſe *Achans* that are the Troublers of our *Iſrael*; and what God expects from us in ſuch Caſes?

I ſhall briefly explain theſe things to you, and apply it to the preſent Occaſion.

But I muſt premiſe, That I only addreſs my ſelf now to thoſe who believe a God and a Providence; and that God hath revealed his Will and the Rule of his Providence in the Holy Scriptures. As for Atheiſts and Infidels, who have neither Eyes nor Ears, they can only feel the Rod like Bruits, not hear its Voice like Men: Though *the Lord's Voice crieth unto the City, it is only the Men of Wiſdom that ſee his Name.*

Now as for thoſe who believe a God and the Holy Scriptures, there are two very plain Interpreters of God's Judgments; *Natural Conſcience, and the Word of God.* For the Judgments of God have not an Articulate Voice to acquaint us in plain and expreſs Words, upon what Errand they come; but they are Signs which ſpeak by an Interpreter; and if we carefully attend to the Dictates of Natural Conſcience, and to the Word of God, we cannot miſtake their meaning.

1. As firſt, No Man who attends either to the Dictates of Natural Conſcience, or to the Word of God, can

doubt *who it is that hath appointed th Rod:* This is the first and most natura question of all; and yet a great many who profess to believe a God and a Pro vidence, seem not well satisfied in this Point: They allow that some Judg ments are the Hand of God, but are not willing to grant this of all; espe cially when they see what the imme diate and visible Causes of such Suffer ings are.

Some of the greatest Evils which ei ther private Men or Publick Societies suffer, are manifestly owing to the In justice and Wickedness of Men; and they can no more believe that it is the Will and Appointment of God, that they should suffer such Evils, than that it is the Will of God that others should do them And all such Rods as are not appointed by God, can teach us nothing but the Wick edness of those by whom we suffer; for if God has not sent them, they can bring us no Message from God. And yet most Men are in some degree infect ed with this Disease: We suffer many E vils which we are not willing to ascribe to God, and then we learn nothing from them but a little Worldly Policy and Prudence, to take better care of our selves

ſelves and our Affairs, to be jealous and diſtruſtful of Men; or, it may be, to watch our Opportunities to revenge the Injuries we ſuffer, and to return them with Intereſt: And yet we profeſs to believe a Providence; though it were as Honourable to God to deny his Providence, as to deny his Sovereign Diſpoſal and Government of all Events; or rather, they are both an equal Reproach to him, For a Providence which does not take care of Creatures, is little worth; and we cannot ſay that God takes care of his Creatures, if any Evil befals them without his Will and Appointment.

But Natural Conſcience ſees the Hand of God in all the Evils we ſuffer: Whatever the viſible and immediate Cauſes and Inſtruments of our Sufferings are, a guilty Conſcience takes notice of the Divine Vengeance; the Terrors of God take hold upon him, and he trembles before his Judge, though he do not ſee him; he is afraid of God, when he feels only the Hands of Men. And what is the meaning of this? What is the Language of theſe guilty Fears, but that whatever the Rod be that ſtrikes, it is moved and directed by a Divine Hand;

Hand; that the Wickedneſs and Injuſtice, the Wrath and Fury of Men, is no other than the Vengeance of God? For why ſhould the Evils we ſuffer from Men ſo terrifie a guilty Conſcience, had we not a Natural Perſuaſion, that all theſe Evils are ſent by God, whoever are the Inſtruments of them?

Thus it is natural in all ſuch Caſes to fly to God for help. Atheiſts themſelves cannot wholly prevent this; but when they are ſurprized with any ſudden Dangers, Nature is too quick and too powerful for their Philoſophy, and ſurprizes them into an Acknowledgment of God and a Providence, which they muſt do Penance for when their Fright is over. Sinners who forget God in Proſperity, fly to him in their Diſtreſs; *remember that God is their Rock, and the High God their Redeemer.* And if this be a Natural Acknowledgment of Providence, as it certainly is, it owns the Hand of God in our Sufferings, as well as his Power to ſave; for both equally belong to the Supreme and Sovereign Lord of the World; and it is not meerly his Power to help, which makes Sinners fly to God in their Diſtreſs, but a Senſe of his Anger in what they ſuffer:

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They do not fly to God as Men do to a powerful Patron, but as Criminals do to the Mercy of a provok'd Father or Prince: When they fly to God, it is to implore his Mercy as humble Penitents, to appeaſe his Anger, that he may remove his Judgments; and when we fly to the Mercies of God to remove the Rod, it is an Acknowledgment that it is he that ſtrikes, as well as he alone that can ſave.

And that Conſcience judges right in all this, however ſome Men may attribute it to a Superſtitious Education, is evident from Scripture, which expreſly tells us, *That God doth whatſoever pleaſeth him both in Heaven and in Earth.* That *none can ſtay his Hand, or reſiſt his Will*, or *ſay unto him, What doſt thou?* That *there is no Evil in the City, which the Lord hath not done.* If *Job* be ſtript of all his large Poſſeſſions in a day, it is *the Lord that gave, and the Lord that taketh away.* If the mighty King of *Aſſyria* invade *Iſrael*, and lay waſte their Cities and Country, he *is the Rod of God's Anger, and the Staff in his Hand is his Indignation*, Iſa. 10. 5, 6. *Affliction cometh not forth of the Duſt, neither doth Trouble ſpring out of the Ground, but God is the Judge,*

Judge, he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another, Pſal. 75. 7, 8. This ſhews us, that whatever our Sufferings are, it is God that appoints the Rod, and then it muſt nearly concern us,

2*dly*, To hear the Rod, what and to whom it ſpeaks. Now in this Caſe alſo, Conſcience and the Word of God are the beſt Interpreters of God's Judgments. The Rod teacheth another way, but teacheth the ſame thing that Conſcience and Scripture teach us; that is, it proclaims aloud the Evil of Sin, and God's Anger and Diſpleaſure againſt it, and calls us to Repentance, and Reformation of our Lives.

When the Judgments of God are upon us, Conſcience knows their Errand, and calls all our Sins to remembrance, and ſets them in order before us. Nothing but Guilt makes us afraid of God; and how quiet and ſecure ſoever Sinners are at other times, the Judgments of God will awaken their guilty Fears; and if Men will hearken to the Voice of an awaken'd Conſcience, it will certainly tell them why God ſtrikes; and we cannot take a ſafer Courſe, than to reform thoſe Sins of which our Conſciences then accuſe us.

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All the Threatnings of Scripture are againſt Sin, and all the Judgments there recorded, eſpecially Publick and National Judgments, were inflicted for the Puniſhment of Sin; and theſe are to be our Examples, as they are the ſtanding Rules and Meaſures of Providence. God never puniſhes but for Sin, though he may exerciſe particular good Men with difficult Trials; and therefore when bad Men and a wicked Nation ſuffer, they may certainly know the Cauſe; they have ſinned, and God is angry, and ſummons them to Repentance; *for this is the fruit of all, to take away Sin.* The Voice of Judgments is the ſame with the Voice of Conſcience, and the Voice of God's Prophets; *Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes: Ceaſe to do Evil, learn to do well; ſeek Judgment, relieve the Oppreſſed, judge the Fatherleſs, plead for the Widow,* Iſa. 1. 16, 17.

This is plain enough, and ſufficiently known, if it were but ſufficiently laid to Heart; and this is all that we are concerned to know of the Judgments of God. The ſecret and hidden Deſigns of Providence, which many times ſur-

ſurpize the World with unexpecte
Events, are the Care of God, an
belong not to us, till the Scene o
pens, and we ſee what part is allo
ted us in it. Whatever God be a
doing, we have nothing to do but t
amend our Lives, which will remov
the Scourge from us, and entitle us t
the Care and Protection of Providence
Whereas to buſie our ſelves with Poli
tick or Prophetick Gueſſes at unknown
Events, to paint our Imaginations with
black and frightful, or with gay an
charming Scenes of Things, as deſpond
ing Fears, or ſanguine Hopes inſpire th
Prophet, can do us no good, but may d
a great deal of hurt to our ſelves an
the World. This is not the Voice o
the Rod, which makes no new Reve
lations to us, but only awakens th
Convictions of Conſcience, and enforce
the Reproofs and Threatnings of th
Word, with ſuch ſenſible and ſmarting
Proofs of the Evil of Sin, and God's
Anger againſt it, as will make all Men
conſider, who have not loſt their Sen
ſes; and many times reſtore Senſe and
Underſtanding to thoſe who had loſt
them.

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But this to ſome Men will ſeem a very dull Account of God's Judgments, which will neither gratifie their Curioſity, nor ill Nature; nor, which they think worſe, leave them any excuſe to palliate their Hypocriſie.

The Judgments of God declare God's Anger againſt Sin, and call us to Repentance: This Men will own, but do not like to hear it expreſs'd in ſuch general Terms, as if when God ſends his Judgments amongſt us, he were angry with us for all our Sins, and called us to repent of them all: This they think hard, that they muſt part with all their Sins, to remove theſe Judgments; nay, this they think can't be the Truth of the Caſe, becauſe the World is always very wicked, and yet the Judgments of God are not always abroad in the World: And therefore they ſuppoſe, that when God does execute Judgments, it is not Sin in general, but ſome particular Sins, which ſo highly provoke him; and could they learn what they are, and reform them, they might ſee happy Days again: And this ſets Men at liberty to favour what Sins they pleaſe, to reproach and accuſe each other, and to charge all the Evils and Calamities they ſuf-

ſuffer upon one another, without thinking of reforming themſelves.

Thus to be ſure it always is, when there are differing Parties and Factions in a Nation, who judge very differently of Good and Evil: They will all confeſs they are great Sinners, and, it may be, too many of all Parties are guilty of the ſame Sins; but thoſe Sins which are common to them all, muſt paſs for nothing, becauſe ſo far they are all agreed. But then there are peculiar Party-Sins, which every Party diſlikes in each other; and what they diſlike, they conclude God diſlikes too; and to theſe they attribute all the Evils they ſuffer: As if the Judgments of God were not to reform the World, but to decide ſome Party-Quarrels, which will never be decided this way, when every Party will expound Judgments in favour of themſelves.

But all Men ſee that this is to judge by a falſe and partial Rule: This is neither Conſcience nor Scripture; for Conſcience equally condemns all Sin, and ſo does the Scripture too. I grant, tho' there is always a great deal of wickedneſs committed in the World, God does not always inflict Publick Judgments, which

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are commonly executed when Wickedneſs and Impiety is grown publick too; when publick Government is remiſs in puniſhing Wickedneſs, or the Numbers and Power of Sinners are grown too great for the Correction of publick Juſtice: But we ſhall always find in Scripture, that when God did inflict publick Judgments, he called for a general Repentance and Reformation; and if this were not ſo, no Man could underſtand the Voice of the Rod without a Spirit of Prophecy. But this deſerves a more particular Conſideration, both with reſpect to thoſe Sins for which God moſt commonly ſends his Judgments, when he ſees fit to execute a publick Vengeance; and the neceſſity of an univerſal Reformation, when the Judgments of God are upon us.

1. The moſt general Account the Scripture gives us of publick Judgments, is an univerſal Corruption of Manners. Thus the Prophet deſcribes the State of the *Jewiſh* Church, when God threatned his Judgments againſt them: *Ah ſinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquity, a Seed of evil Doers, Children that are Corrupters; they have forſaken the*

Lord, they have provoked the Holy One o Iſrael, they are gone away backward. And *the whole Head is ſick, and the whol Heart faint. From the Sole of th Foot unto the Head, there is no Soundneſ in it; but Wounds and Bruiſes, and pu trifying Sores: they have not been clo ſed, nor bound up, nor mollified with Oint ment*, Iſa. 1. 4, 5, 6. And in Verſe 10 he calls them, *The Rulers of Sodom, an People of Gomorrah.* When Wickedneſ is grown univerſal, and hath infected al Ranks and Orders of Men, ſuch a Na tion is ripe for Judgment; but it add greatly to the Guilt and Provocation when Men are not contented to b wicked, without bidding open Defianc to God and to all Religion. *Wo unt them who draw Iniquity with Cords of Va nity, and ſin as it were with Cart-rope* Who deride all the Threatnings of God and even dare his Power and Juſtice *That ſay, Let him make ſpeed and haſt en his Work, that we may ſee it; and le the Counſel of the Holy One of Iſrael draw nigh, and come, that we may know it* Who mock at the differences of Good and Evil, and value the Reputation o their Wit and Philoſophy too much to be cheated with ſuch empty Names. *Wo un-*

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to them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil, that put Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs, that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for bitter. Wo unto them that are wiſe in their own Eyes, and prudent in their own Sight. Who having firſt deſtroyed the eternal and eſſential differences of Good and Evil, change their Names too at pleaſure, and think themſelves the only wiſe Men in the World for doing ſo. This takes off all Reſtraints, and gives the Reins to their Luſts, and they live, juſt as they believe, without making any difference between Good and Evil. *Wo unto them that are mighty to drink Wine, and Men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong Drink; who juſtifie the Wicked for a Reward, and take away the Righteouſneſs of the Righteous from him. Therefore as the Fire devoureth the Stubble, and the Flame conſumeth the Chaff, ſo their Root ſhall be as Rottenneſs, and their Bloſſom ſhall go up as the Duſt, becauſe they have caſt away the Law of the Lord of Hoſts, and deſpiſed the Word of the Holy One of Iſrael,* Iſa. 5. 18, &c. The like Account we find in the other Prophets. And when the State of a Church and Nation is ſo corrupt, we need not enquire for what par-

ticular Sins God ſtrikes; but yet ther
were ſome Sins which God expreſſed
ſeverer Indignation againſt, and ſeldo
delayed to puniſh; ſuch as their Id
latry, and Contempt of the God
Iſrael, of his Word and Prophets;
Prophanation of his Worſhip; Athe
iſtical Notions of Providence, and
Good and Evil; or their abominab
Hypocriſie, in committing all the Lew
neſs and Villanies which Men cou
commit, and ſheltring themſelves in
external Form and Appearance of R
ligion, which the Prophets every whe
complain of. To theſe Cauſes is o
ing the univerſal Corruption of Ma
ners; for it is impoſſible any Nati
ſhould ſo univerſally degenerate,
they have either corrupted their Re
gion by Superſtition and Hypocriſie,
loſt all Senſe of it; and therefore t
calls for a ſpeedy Vengeance.

As for what more particularly co
cerns the Chriſtian Church, we m
learn from the Epiſtles to the Sev
Churches of *Aſia*, what it is provok
our Lord either ſeverely to puniſh us,
to remove the Goſpel from us. T
Church of *Epheſus*, though ſhe had
quitted her ſelf well in many thing

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yet *had left her first Love*, had abated very much of her Zeal and Fervour for the Name and Religion of Christ. The Church of *Pergamus* is threatned for suffering those among her who taught Idolatrous Worship, and fleshly Lusts: And the Church of *Thyatira* likewise for suffering the Woman *Jezabel* to commit Fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to Idols. The Church of *Sardis* made a glorious and pompous Profession of Religion, but without the true Life and Spirit of it; *she had a name to live, but was dead*; And the Church of *Laodicea* grew very cold and indifferent even in the Profession of Religion, as well as in the Practice of it; she was neither *hot nor cold, but lukewarm.* All these our Saviour summons to Repentance, and threatens to punish or destroy them if they did not, *Chap.* 2, and 3. of the *Revelations.*

The Application of all this to our selves is so obvious, that I need not multiply Words about it: We are that very Nation wherein all these Evils meet; it is hard to name any Vice which is not openly committed amongst us without Fear or Shame; Nay, things are come

to that pass, that to be a modest Sinner, to boggle at any Wickedness, o to blush at it, is as great a Reproach as to be Virtuous: And though som Men are ashamed to own themselve Atheists, yet to believe in Christ, an to own any Reveal'd Religion, or t talk seriously of Providence, of God governing the World, and punishin Cities and Nations for their Wicked ness, is thought a Jest; and I wi it were a Jest only among vile an mean People, of no Fortune or Educa tion; whereas we often see that the Condition makes them modest, and un taught Nature teaches them better, t they are corrupted by the Examples Men of Wit and Figure in the Worl And as for those who pretend to Re gion, it is a very melancholy Prospec to observe how little of the true Li and Spirit of Christianity there is mong them. There is indeed Noi and Zeal, and Faction enough amon some People, and that makes others cold and indifferent: The Tempers of th Church of *Sardis* and *Laodicea*, th one that had a Name to live, but wa dead, the other that was lukewarm make much the greatest Parties amon

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us; and the very beſt Men, I fear, are too much inclined to the State of *Epheſus*, which had *left her firſt Love*, thoſe great Paſſions and Ardours of Devotion which ought to inſpire the Minds of Chriſtians.

Let us then hear the Rod and tremble: See how God dealt with the *Jewiſh* Church for theſe Sins; ſee what our Lord hath done to the Churches of *Aſia*; and though we cannot ſay what God will do to us, becauſe we know not what wonderful Deſigns are in the Womb of Providence, yet we know what we do, and how God hath dealt with thoſe who have done as we do; which is too juſt reaſon to fear that he will deal ſo by us too, unleſs we repent and reform, which they did not. For,

2dly. When the Judgments of God are upon us, the Reformation muſt be univerſal too: It concerns every Man to reform himſelf; for a Nation can never be reformed, but by the Reformation of particular Men, who make up the Nation; and therefore when we are ſummon'd to Repentance, as the Judgments of God ſummon us all, every

Man muſt examine himſelf what he has to repent of, and reform himſelf. But yet there is great difference between a National and Perſonal Repentance and Reformation, and they ſerve very different Ends.

A Nation may be ſaid to be reformed, and God may in great Mercy remove his Judgments, though (what is never to be expected) every particular Man do not repent and reform himſelf: But then ſuch a National Reformation requires the Execution of publick Juſtice againſt publick Wickedneſs, to make Sin publickly infamous, and to teach the greateſt and moſt powerful Sinners Modeſty: To baniſh, if not Sinners, yet Sin out of our Courts, and out of our Streets, and to make it once more ſeek for Night and Darkneſs for a Covering; that Virtue may no longer bluſh in Company, or need Apologies; Nor Vice dare to brave it at Noon-day.

There has indeed of late been ſome Care taken by publick Laws and Royal Proclamations, to puniſh the Prophanation of God's Name by accurſed Oaths; but yet in moſt Caſes Men may be as vile as they pleaſe, and as publickly ſo as

as they pleaſe, and little or no notice taken of them; nay, they may talk and write what they pleaſe againſt God and Religion, ridicule the Hiſtory of *Moſes*, and the Goſpel of our Saviour, and the Myſteries of the Chriſtian Faith, and gain Credit and Reputation byit. I hope there are not many Chriſtian Nations in the World, which in ſo publick a manner permit theſe things. We have talk'd of Liberty of Conſcience, and Reformation, to good purpoſe, if the only Effect of it be a Liberty of ridiculing the Chriſtian Faith; which might make one ſuſpect that all the Zeal ſome Men have expreſs'd againſt Popery, was at the bottom of it a Zeal for Atheiſm and Irreligion; which the Diſcipline of Popery, as bad a Religion as it is, would not endure; it is indeed well fitted to make Atheiſts and Infidels, but will make Men have a care how they profeſs it. And it is to be feared, that this Scepticiſm, and Infidelity, and Contempt of Religion, will prove a Back-door to let in Popery again upon us.

But to leave theſe Thoughts with thoſe whoſe proper Care and Buſineſs it is; whether a Nation will be reformed

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or not, it concerns every particular Man to hear the Rod: The Judgments of God warn us of his Anger and Diſpleaſure againſt Sin, that we may fly from the Wrath to come; and we do not hear the Voice of the Rod, nor improve Judgments to their true end, if we do not ſo repent and reform, as to ſave our Souls; and this to be ſure muſt be a Perſonal and an Univerſal Reformation. And yet even with reſpect to preſent Judgments, a Perſonal Repentance and Reformation is of great uſe; for when the Judgment is Publick and National, God many times makes a remarkable diſtinction between Perſons: *Say ye to the Righteous it ſhall be well with them, for they ſhall reap the fruit of their Doings: Wo unto the Wicked, it ſhall be ill with him, for the Reward of his Hands ſhall be given to him:* Which is ſpoke with reſpect to Publick Judgments, *Iſa.* 3. 10, 11. Which is a ſufficient Encouragement for particular Men to repent, and reform their Lives, whatever others do.

But it is time to apply what I have now diſcourſed, to the particular Occaſion of this Day's Solemnity; though poſſibly ſome may think that this Application

plication comes too late; it might have been very ſeaſonable one or two and thirty Years ago, while the Marks of this terrible Vengeance were freſh and viſible; when the Ruins of our Houſes and Churches could only tell us where *London* ſtood, and ſhew us its Funeral Pile, where its Glory lay in the Duſt: When ſo many thouſand Families felt the ſmart of their ruined Fortunes, and were either forc'd to begin the World again, or ſunk irrecoverably under it. This fiery Vengeance had a Voice then, and a very terrible Voice, enough to awaken the moſt ſtupid and Lethargick Sinners. But when we ſee our City rebuilt more beautiful than ever, as the little poor Remains of the old one witneſs: When our Riches and Glory are increaſed beyond the Example of moſt former Ages, it ſeems too late to lament over the Aſhes and Rubbiſh of our fired City, when there are no viſible Remains of theſe Ruins to move our Pity or Sorrow: And indeed were this the only Deſign of this Annual Faſt, it were high time to put an end to it, or to turn it into a Thankſgiving Feſtival: For it is in vain to expect, that after three and thirty Years, the return of this

this Day ſhould revive and renew our Sorrows and Lamentations, when our Ruins are removed, our Loſſes repaired, and thoſe frightful Impreſſions which the ſight of that devouring Fire made on us, forgot; and little left to put us in mind that our City was burnt, but the Inſcription upon the *Monument*, and the ſight of a New City, with the ſeveral Dates of its Reſurrection; which muſt needs qualifie all melancholy and ſorrowful Reflections on what is ſo long paſt.

But though the Deſign of this Solemnity is not to repreſent and act over again a new doleful Scene of Horror, Confuſion, and Amazement, which neither Nature nor Art can imitate, as we ſaw it once on this Day, without ſuch another amazing Sight, which God grant we may never ſee again till the General Conflagration; yet it is of great uſe to keep up a lively Senſe of ſuch Judgments upon our Minds, which become the Subject of Reaſon, of cool Thoughts and wiſe Conſideration, when the Terror and Frightfulneſs of them is over.

Judgments could never make a laſting Reformation in the World, were we con-

concerned to remember them no longer than we feel their Smart; but they are intended both for Puniſhment and Inſtruction; the Puniſhment ends with the Smart, and that puts an end to all whining and tragical Complaints; but this alone is the Diſcipline of Fools or Brutes: The Inſtruction is for Men, and this is to laſt as long as Memory, and Thought, and Reaſon laſt. What could the Fire of *London* teach us thirty three Years ago, which it does not teach a wiſe Man ſtill? And what Thoughts and devout Paſſions became us then, which are not ſtill on this Day the proper Exerciſe of our Devotion?

When we ſaw our Churches and Houſes in Flames, when we ſaw thoſe furious Torrents of Fire rowling down our Streets, and deſpiſing all the Oppoſition that Humane Art or Strength could make, as if they had known by what a Divine and Irreſiſtible Commiſſion they acted; there were few Men to be found, who did not expreſs a great Fear and Reverence of the Power and Juſtice, and terrible Majeſty of God, who did not ſee and own the Hand of God, and the viſible Tokens of his Diſpleaſure, and begin in good earneſt to think

think of reforming their Lives, and making their Peace with God, who had now taken the Rod into his own Hand.

When we ſaw our Riches make to themſelves Wings and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven; when we ſaw all our Pride and Glory, the Toil and Labour of our whole Lives, the Food and the Inſtruments of our Luſts, vaniſh into Smoke and Duſt; this effectually taught us the Uncertainty of all preſent things, and made us ſeriouſly conſider what an ill State thoſe were in, who had nothing to truſt to but ſuch vaniſhing Treaſures; and how reaſonable our Saviour's Command is, *Not to lay up for our ſelves Treaſures on Earth, where Moth and Ruſt do corrupt, and where Thieves break through and ſteal*; but to *lay up for our ſelves Treaſures in Heaven*, which are not ſubject to ſuch Caſualties; which will make us bear ſuch Loſſes better when they come, and ſecure our eternal Intereſt.

When Men ſaw their Riches and Treaſures vaniſh in a Cloud, it naturally made them conſider how much of this they owed to the Poor, how much

much they daily ſpent upon their Luſts, and how much they had unjuſtly got; that is, how much of what God had taken from them was not their own, and how much they had abuſed the Gifts of God: Very wiſe and pious Thoughts, had they laſted; and yet too plain to be miſſed by thoſe who thought at all, when they ſaw theſe Leſſons written in bright Characters of Fire.

Now was all this, do you think, calculated only for *Sixty ſix*? Is not God the ſame ſtill? a Juſt and Righteous Judge, who is *angry with the wicked every day*, though he do not every day *bend his Bow*, and let fly his Arrows; though he do not every day *make the Earth tremble and quake, and the very Foundations of the Hills to ſhake, becauſe he is angry*; though we do not every day ſee *a Smoke go out of his Preſence, and a conſuming Fire out of his Mouth*; though he do not upon every Provocation appear in his terrible Majeſty, *riding upon the Cherubins, and flying upon the Wings of the Wind.* Methinks one ſuch Example might ſerve us for ſome Ages, without expecting or deſiring to be ſummoned

moned again to Repentance by new Terrors. *God is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs:* He delights more to diſplay his Glory in Acts of Goodneſs and Bounty to his Creatures; but Judgments are his *ſtrange Work*, which makes the ſignal Execution of them ſo very rare; and the way to have them rare, is not to forget them, to learn Righteouſneſs by the things which we have ſuffered; to fear and tremble before that God who is ſo *terrible in his Doings towards the Children of Men.*

But if the Fire of *London* was too long ſince to work upon our Fears at this diſtance, (though I confeſs I wonder how any Man who ſaw that Sight, ſhould ever forget it, or remember it without a juſt Awe and Reverence of God;) but, I ſay, if theſe Impreſſions of Fear and Terror are loſt, let the Beauty and Glory of our New City, our increaſing Riches, our flouriſhing Trade, our Eaſe and Plenty, teach us to Love and Reverence, and Worſhip and Praiſe that God, who *in the midſt of Judgment hath remembred Mercy*; who hath *pluck'd us as a Firebrand out of the Fire*, and hath not ſuffered our Enemies to triumph o-

ver

ver us, *who ſaid, Down with it, down with it, even to the Ground.* This is the way to perpetuate our Proſperity and Glory, if the Remembrance of paſt Judgments teaches us to Fear God, the Senſe of his preſent Mercies to Love him, and both to Obey him.

Which God of his Infinite Mercy grant, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and ever. Amen.

SERMON XIII.

THE Divine Preſence IN *Religious Aſſemblies:*

Preach'd at the Cathedral-Church of St. *Paul*, the Firſt *Sunday* after Opening the QUIRE, *December.* 5. 1697.

Pſalm xcvi. 9.

O worſhip the Lord in the Beauty of Holineſs.——

WE have lately made our firſt Solemn Appearance before God in this Houſe with all the External Solemnities of Worſhip, and, I hope, with thoſe Tranſports and

Ardours of Devotion, which ſuch grea
Occaſions require: Excepting thoſ
Chriſtian Feaſts, which *contain* the My
ſteries of our Redemption by Jeſu
Chriſt, Two more joyful Solemnitie
could not well have met in One Day
the One a Feaſt of Dedication, the O
ther of Peace. Bleſſed Union! Ma
theſe Two be never parted: May th
Church enjoy Reſt and Eaſe under th
Gracious Influences of a Victorio
Prince; and may the Throne be eſt
bliſhed in Peace by its Love and Ze
for God's Houſe.

The Publick Solemnities of Worſhi
and the Publick Peace of Church an
State, are the moſt comprehenſive Ble
ſings which we can enjoy in this Worl
They are an Inferiour Accompliſhme
of the Angelick Hymn at the Birth
our Saviour; *Glory be to God in t
Higheſt, on Earth Peace, Good Will t
wards Men.*

Theſe are the Matter of our preſe
Joy, which ought not to be confine
to one ſhort Day, but to be had in pe
petual Remembrance, as we hope an
pray, that theſe Bleſſings may be pe
petual.

Bu

But my present Design relates to God's House, and that Worship, which we must pay to God there. *O worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.*

1. And first I shall begin with the *Beauty of Holiness*: the right understanding of which may possibly turn some Mens Curiosity into Devotion. There is, I think, no dispute, but that by the *Beauty of Holiness*, the Psalmist means the Tabernacle or Sanctuary; for if *David* was the Penman of this Psalm, the Temple at *Jerusalem* was not then built, and thus it is applied in this Psalm, *ver.* 6. *Honour and Majesty are before him, Strength and Beauty are in his Sanctuary:* and v. 7. *Give unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name, bring an Offering, and come into his Courts*; which is immediately explained in the Words of my Text, *O worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness*; and thus the Seventy render it both here and in *Psalm* 29. 2. ἐν αὐλῇ ἁγίᾳ αὐτοῦ, in his Holy Tabernacle: This was the peculiar Place of Worship under the Law, which is called the *Beauty of Holiness*, from that excellent and incommunicable Majesty which dwelt there.

There is ſuch frequent mention mad in the Old Teſtament of God's peculia Preſence in ſome places above other Of the Houſe of God, where he dwell where he places his Name, where h ſits between the Cherubims, and ſuch peculiar Sanctity and Holineſs for th reaſon attributed to theſe Places, tha no Man denies the Diſtinction and Ho lineſs of Places under the *Jewiſh* D ſpenſation: But there are too many, wh think, that the Goſpel of Chriſt has pu an end to all ſuch Diſtinction of Place as it has done to all other *Jewiſh* Ce remonies; that God has no othe Church now, but the Aſſemblies Chriſtians, and the Hearts of devo Worſhippers, in what Place ſoever the meet; that to think God is more pr ſent, or more acceptably worſhipped i one Place than in another, is either *Pa gan* or *Jewiſh* Superſtition; that to be have our ſelves with greater Reverenc in a Chriſtian Church, than we do i our own private Houſes, unleſs it be i the immediate Acts of Worſhip, is n better than to worſhip Wood, and Bricks and Stone, as if they had ſome peculia Sanctity in them.

This

This, as ſlight a Matter as ſome may think it, is of miſchievous conſequence to Religion, as it delivers Mens Minds from thoſe awful Regards to the Divine Preſence, which ought to poſſeſs them when they approach God's Houſe; as is too often ſeen in a careleſs and irreverent Worſhip: And therefore I ſhall *take this Occaſion* briefly to repreſent this Matter, which when truly ſtated, will admit of little diſpute.

To aſſert in looſe and general Terms the Holineſs of Places, and that Religious Regard and Reverence, which is to be paid to them, may, I confeſs, give juſt Offence to Chriſtian Ears, as if the Place and Houſe it ſelf had ſuch a Holineſs, that we muſt not only worſhip God in ſuch a Place, but that we muſt pay ſome Religious Reverence to the Houſe it ſelf with relation to God: For if once we admit of any kind of Relative Worſhip, I know not where we can ſtop, but may as well worſhip Pictures, and Images, and Crucifixes, as Holy Places, upon account of their relation to God and Chriſt. But yet no underſtanding Chriſtian will deny, that we muſt worſhip God with all Humility of Soul and Body, where-ever

we know, that God is peculiarly present to receive our Worship; that if there be any such Places, where God is thus peculiarly present, we must approach his Presence, and behave our selves while we continue there, with all Religious Reverence and Devotion. It is the peculiar Presence of God, which is the only Holiness of any Place, and which alone challenges our Religious Adorations. And the reasonableness and necessity of this, every one must own, who acknowledges the peculiar Presence of God in the appropriated Places of Worship: For if God be peculiarly present there to receive our Worship, whenever we approach his Presence, we ought to approach him with all the external Signs of Reverence; which is not to reverence the Place, but to reverence that excellent Majesty, which is peculiarly present in that Place.

So that rightly to understand this Matter, I must briefly explain the Scripture Notion of God's peculiar Presence in the Places of Worship, and what Reverence such a Presence requires from us, when we approach such Places.

First

First then I observe, that though it be the constant Doctrine of Scripture, that God is essentially present in all Places, yet there are some Places which are peculiarly called *his Presence*; and thus it has been ever since the Creation; where-ever God manifested himself peculiarly present, such Places were called *his Presence*, and became the ordinary standing Places of Worship.

It does not seem improbable to me, that though all Paradise might be called *the Presence of God*, yet there was some peculiar Place, even in Paradise it self, where God did most ordinarily appear to our first Parents: for we read in *Genesis* 3. 8. that when *Adam* and *Eve* had eaten the forbidden Fruit, *they heard the Voice of the Lord God*; that is, the Eternal Word, *walking in the Garden in the cool of the Evening, and Adam and his Wife hid themselves from the Presence of the Lord God, amongst the Trees of the Garden.* Which seems to intimate, that there was some particular Place in Paradise where God used to meet with them, from which they fled, and by so doing, thought to hide themselves from the Presence of God.

In

In the Story of *Cain* and *Abel*, this seems more plain; there was at that time some peculiar Place, whither they brought their Offerings to God, and therefore where God was supposed peculiarly present to receive their Offerings, *Gen.* 4. 3, 4. and in *v.* 14. *Cain* complains, *Behold thou hast driven me out this Day from the Face of the Earth, and from thy Face shall I be hid*; that is, from thy Presence; as it is expounded *ver.* 16. *Cain went out from the Presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the Land of Nod.* Where it is plain, the Presence of the Lord signifies a certain Place, where God was so present, as he was not in other Places; for we can never go out of the Essential Presence of God, as the Psalmist witnesses, *Psalm* 139. 6, 7, 8, 9. *Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit, or whither shall I go from thy Presence: If I climb up into Heaven thou art there; if I go down into Hell thou art there: If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermost Parts of the Sea, even there also shall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right Hand shall hold me*; and therefore in this Sense the Land of *Nod* was as much God's Presence, as where *Abel* and *Cain* dwelt before; but *Cain* went

went out from the Preſence of God into the Land of *Nod*; that is from that place, where God dwelt, and converſed with them, into a Land where he never vouchſafed ſuch a peculiar preſence.

In the Hiſtory of *Abraham*, *Iſaack*, and *Jacob*, we not only learn, that in thoſe days, they always had their peculiar and appropriate places of worſhip, but that they pitched their Tents, and built their Altars, either in ſuch places, as God directed them to, or where God appeared to them, and thoſe were the places, where God ordinarily Converſt with them.

Thus the Lord *appeared unto* Abram *in the place of* Sichem *in the Plain of* Moreh, *and there he built an Altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him*: *Geneſ.* 12. 6, 7. hither he returned again when he came out of *Ægypt* unto the place of the Altar which he had made there at firſt, and there he called on the Name of the Lord, *Geneſ.* 13 4. ſo that the appearance of God to him in this place, had made it a ſtanding place of Worſhip; and here God appeared to him again, and renewed his Promiſe to him, after the departure of *Lot*.

After this by God's command *Abram* re-

removed his Tent, and dwelt in the Plain of *Mamre*, and there he built an Altar to the Lord, *Genes.* 13. 18. and here God frequently appeared to *Abram* as we may see in 15, 17, 18, *Chap.* Thus when God appeared to *Isaack* at *Beer-sheba*, he built an Altar, and called upon the Name of the Lord, and pitcht his Tent, and took up his abode there, as in a place, where God was present, 26 *Genes.* 24, 25.

Thus as *Jacob* was going towards *Haran*, being forced to lodge all night in the Field, in his Dream he saw a Ladder set upon the Earth, and the top reach'd to Heaven, and the Angels of God ascended and descended on it, and God himself stood above it, and renewed his Promise and Covenant to *Jacob*: From hence *Jacob* concluded, that God was peculiarly present in this place, *how dreadful is this place, this is none other, but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven*; and therefore he calls the place *Bethel*, and set up the Stone for a Pillar, whereon he lay, and powred Oil on it and vowed, that if he came again in peace to his Fathers House, that Stone, which he had set up should be God's House, 28 *Gen.* and accordingly

ly when he was returned from *Pâdan-Aram*, God himſelf commanded him to go up to *Bethel* and dwell there, and to make there an Altar to God, who appeared to him, when he fled from the Face of his Brother *Eſau*, 35 *Geneſ.* 1.

After the Days of the Patriarchs, the next inſtance of this nature, is that of *Moſes* to whom God appeared in a burning Buſh, and ſaid, *Draw not nigh hither, put off thy Shoes from off thy Feet, for the place whereon thou ſtandeſt is holy ground*, that is, conſecrated by the Preſence of God, to whom we muſt approach with all external Reverence, which pulling off the Shoes was an expreſſion of in thoſe Eaſtern Countries, 3 *Exod.* 1, &c. and a like example we have in *Joſhua* 5 *Chap.* 13, 14, 15.

And this is a true Account of the holineſs even of the *Jewiſh* Tabernacle and Temple: There were indeed great Myſteries concealed under Types and Figures, but theſe Types were not the holineſs of the place, but God's peculiar Preſence there. When Moſes had ſet up the Tabernacle, *a Cloud covered the Tent of the Congregation, and the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle*, 40 Exod.

Exod. 34. Thus at the Dedication of *Solomon*'s Temple, *when the Prieſts were come out of the Holy Place, the Cloud filled this Houſe of the Lord, ſo that the Prieſts could not ſtand to miniſter becauſe of the Cloud, for the Glory of the Lord had filled the Houſe of the Lord*, 1 Kings 8. 10, 11. This was a viſible Sign, that God had taken poſſeſſion of this Houſe, and would dwell there, as *Solomon* expounds it 12, 13, *ver. Then ſpake* Solomon, *the Lord ſaid he would dwell in the thick darkneſs. I have ſurely built Thee a Houſe to dwell in, a ſetled place for Thee to abide in for ever.* For this reaſon it is called the Houſe of God, his Habitation, his Dwelling-place, his Gate, his Courts, and (which is the true Interpretation of all this) his Preſence. *Let us come before his Preſence with thanſgiving* 95 Pſal. 2. that is, to his Houſe and Temple, where God is preſent, which is therefore called *appearing before the Lord*, as all the Tribes of *Iſrael* were commanded to do three times every year, at the three ſolemn Feſtivals, and this appearing before the Lord, was their coming up to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip at the Temple.

This I hope ſufficiently proves, that both

both before and under the Law, God, who is eſſentially preſent in all places, was yet ſo peculiarly preſent in ſome places, as he was not in others.

2. But for the better underſtanding this, we muſt inquire, what this ſpecial and peculiar Preſence of God is. For this ſeems a great difficulty to ſome Men, that God who is preſent every where, ſhould not be equally preſent in all places: But the Account of this I think is plain and ſhort, that though God is preſent every where, he is not equally preſent in all places to all purpoſes, which is the only poſſible diſtinction, that can be made concerning the Preſence of an omnipreſent Being. God is preſent in Heaven, in Earth, and in Hell; but he manifeſts himſelf very differently in each, and theſe different Manifeſtations are a different kind of preſence.

As to keep to my preſent Subject: God is preſent in all the Earth, as the Supreme Lord, Governour, and Preſerver of all things; but in ſome Places he was peculiarly preſent to reveal his Will to Men, and to receive their Homage and Adorations: And this is that, which

which is peculiarly called the *Presence* of God in Scripture, as is evident from all the instances, which I have already given.

But is not God present in all places to hear the Prayers of good Men, who call upon him? Yes, most certainly; and so he was both before, and under the Law, and yet we see, that he sanctified some places with his more peculiar presence for the Publick and Solemn Acts of Worship. A Prince may receive a private Petition from a private Hand wherever he is present, but yet may think it very fitting to appoint a Presence of State to receive the publick Homage and Addresses of his Subjects; thus in fact it was in the *Jewish* Temple, and was as reasonable as the publick Solemnities of worship are, without which Religion it self would be banished the World. For did Men once believe, that they could worship God as well at home as at Church, that God is no more present in religious Assemblies; than in their private Closets, there were an end of Publick Worship and of Religion with it. This is too visible in those, who have entertained this Opinion, they either quite desert the Publick Worship, and grow

grow careleſs and unconcerned for Religion, or if they do ſometimes come to Church, it is to comply with Popular Cuſtom and Opinion, or only to gratifie an itching Ear, and *Athenian* like, to hear ſome new thing. But when God who has his Throne in Heaven, has his Footſtool and Preſence on Earth, where he commands us to pay our Homage; this preſerves the Senſe of God and of Religion alive in the World, and gives a juſt awe and reverence for God, when we approach his Preſence.

This is a very Senſible Reaſon for appropriated places of Worſhip, where God vouchſafes his more peculiar Preſence: if this were not originally a Divine Inſtitution, as the Inſtances I have already given fairly intimate it was, then meer natural Reaſon taught it all Mankind; for there never was any Nation, which worſhipped any God, but they erected Temples for their Worſhip: The Poverty and perſecuted State of the Chriſtian Church for the three firſt Centuries, have made ſome think that they had no Churches, or appropriated Places of Worſhip; but a learned Man of our own *Mr. Mede.* has proved beyond all contradiction,

that this is a mistake; and the Zeal of Christians in building Magnificent Churches in the Reign of *Constantine*, the first Christian Emperor, shews plainly what their Sense was of this matter.

And it is as evident, that all Nations did believe, that the Gods they worshipped, were peculiarly present in their Temples. The Pagans did not believe their Gods to be Omnipresent, and therefore endeavoured by Magical Spells and Charms, to shut them up in their Images and Temples, that they might know where to find them; and in this Notion, the ancient Christians abominated the thoughts of Temples and Images, since they worshipped a God, who fills Heaven and Earth with his Presence; this indeed was a corruption of Natural Religion, as Polytheism and Idolatry was, but shews, how necessary they thought a Divine Presence to a place of Worship.

The *Jews* understood better, that God could not be confined to any place, *that the Heaven and Heaven of Heavens could not contain him*, as *Solomon* owns in his Prayer of Dedication, but yet begs that God would be graciously pleased to be present to hear and answer the Prayers

ers and Supplications, which should be made to him in that House; which is all the peculiar Presence he prays for, which is necessary to make a House of Prayer, the name God himself gives to the *Jewish* Temple; *My House shall be called a House of Prayer.*

Now if this be the proper notion of God's House, that it is a House of Prayer, a House where God is peculiarly present to hear our Prayers, we must own, that every Christian Church is as much the House of God as the Temple at *Jerusalem* was, unless we will deny, that God is as present in Christian Assemblies, and in places dedicated to Christian Worship, as he was in the *Jewish* Temple; which is to make Christianity a more imperfect Dispensation than *Judaism*; for that is certainly the most perfect state of the Church, where God is most peculiarly present.

There is indeed a great difference between the *Jewish* Temple and Christian Churches, but as to the Presence of God, which only makes a Temple, the advantage is greatly on the Christian side.

The Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle and Temple, contained many

Types and Figures of Chriſt; but theſe Types were not the Preſence of God, nor the Object of their Religious Worſhip, which had been Idolatry againſt the Second Commandment; but for the ſake of theſe Types, God choſe that place for his peculiar Preſence: Now inſtead of theſe Types, we have the Antetype it ſelf, the Son of God made Fleſh, who though aſcended into Heaven, has promiſed his peculiar Preſence in all the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians; which is ſuch a Preſence of God, as never filled the *Jewiſh* Temple, till Chriſt appeared; for which Reaſon God tells them, that the Second Temple, though it fell vaſtly ſhort of the External Beauty and Magnificence of the Firſt, yet ſhould excel in Glory, by the perſonal Appearance of Chriſt in it, *Haggai* 2. 3, 7. *Malach.* 3. 1. So that Chriſt having promiſed, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his Name, he will be in the midſt of them, every Chriſtian Church has a Divine Preſence greater than the Temple. For though we ſhould grant, that this Promiſe extends to all the occaſional Meetings of Chriſtians, whatever the Place be, yet it much more extends to all the

the Solemn and Publick Places and Acts of Worſhip.

Thus there was but one Temple in the whole Land of *Canaan*, God for Myſtical Reaſons, confining his more peculiar Preſence to that Houſe, where he had placed the Types and Figures of Chriſt, through whom only we have Acceſs to God; but now this bleſſed Jeſus, who is greater than the Temple, is in all Chriſtian Aſſemblies, and makes every Chriſtian Church greater than the Temple: In this Senſe our Saviour told the Woman of *Samaria*, *Woman, believe me, the Hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem, worſhip the Father*, *John* 4. 21. which does not ſignifie, that hereafter there ſhould be no peculiar and appropriate Places of Worſhip, but that the Preſence and Worſhip of God, ſhould no longer be confined to any one Place, neither to the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, nor *Samaria*; but it ſhould be free all the World over, to erect Houſes of Prayer and Worſhip, where God would be as preſent with them, as in the Temple of *Jeruſalem*; for there ſhould be an end now put to that Typical State and Typical Worſhip, which was

confined to the Temple, and *the true Worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth*; and this Spiritual Worſhip is confined to no one Place, but will find God preſent all the World over; which is ſo far from abrogating all peculiar Places of Worſhip, ſuch as the Temple at *Jeruſalem* and *Samaria* were, that it makes every Church, whatever part of the World it be in, in a truer Senſe the Houſe of God, than ever the Temple at *Jeruſalem* was.

And there is one thing more of great conſequence, which we learn from this, that we now want no new Appearance of God to conſecrate a Place for his Worſhip, as it was in the Days of the Patriarchs, nor any new Command to appoint us where to build a Houſe for God, as it was under the Law: Our Saviour has conſecrated every part of the World, where Chriſtians live, to be ſuch Holy Ground as is fit to receive a Temple and Houſe of God; and his Promiſe to be in the midſt of the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians, gives us as great an Aſſurance of a Divine Preſence in ſuch Places, as if like the Tabernacle and Temple, we

ſaw

saw them again filled with a Cloud and a visible Glory.

Having thus shewn you, that God, who fills all Places, is yet peculiarly present in some Places; and what this peculiar Presence is, that God is present as the Object of our Worship, to hear our Prayers, and to receive our Praises and Thanksgivings, our Alms and Oblations, let us now consider the Exhortation of my Text, which is the natural Improvement of this, *O worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.*

1*st.* And here first I observe, that the very External Beauty and Ornament of God's House, is one Part of Homage, which we owe to him. The Riches and visible Glory of *Solomon*'s Temple, was one of the Wonders of the World; a Divine Art and Nature conspired to build a House, as fit as Art and Nature could make it, to signifie the incommunicable Majesty and Glory of that God who dwelt there. And this Nature taught all Mankind; the Magnificence of their Temples did not only shew their Devotion, but what their Art, and what their Riches were. And

the Primitive Christians, when they enjoyed Peace and Plenty under Christian Emperors, were so far from thinking this a Piece of *Pagan* or *Jewish* Superstition, that their first Care was to erect Beautiful and Stately Churches, to rival and out-do all the External Glory of *Pagan* Temples; and it was always accounted a great Instance of the Piety of Princes to encourage and promote such Works.

But you'll say, what is all this to God? Can we think, that he, who has made the World with such unimitable Art and Beauty, can be pleas'd with any House we can build for him, whatever Art or Riches we bestow on it? But this very Objection answers it self: For God has made this Beautiful World for his Temple, and has chose the most Glorious Part of it for his Throne; which shews, that though he be an infinite pure Spirit, he does not despise an External Glory; for thus he must represent his invisible Greatness and Majesty to his Creatures. And therefore when he thinks fit to vouchsafe his Presence with us on Earth, we must provide the most honourable Reception for him that we can; and when we have

have done all that Art and Nature can do, we have so far expres'd our Devotion and Reverence for the Divine Presence.

This Objection lay against the Temple at *Jerusalem*, as well as against Christian Churches; and yet *David* thought it very undecent, and a want of a just Reverence for God, that he himself should dwell in a House of *Cedar*, and the Ark of God dwell within Curtains, 2 *Sam.* 7. 2. which should be considered by those Men, who think all that is bestowed upon Beautifying and Adorning God's House a vain and superfluous Expence, when they think no Cost too great to adorn their own.

2*dly*. The House of God too must be used as God's House; that is, must be separated from common Uses, and appropriated to the Worship of God. It must not be a Place of Trade and Commerce, and ordinary Conversation, as we learn from our Saviour's Zeal in driving those who sold Oxen, and Sheep, and Doves, and the Changers of Money out of the Temple; which he did at two several times; the first immediately upon his entrance on his Mi-

Miniſtry, *Joh* 2. 13, 14, 15, 16. the ſecond immediately before his Crucifixion, *Matth.* 21. 12, 13.

Some learned Men obſerve, that the Place of this Merchandiſe in the Temple, was the Court of the *Gentiles*; and from hence conclude, that our Saviour's Zeal was not confined to the *Jewiſh* Temple, but concerned all Chriſtian Churches, to which the Court of the *Gentiles* bore a greater Analogy; but whatever Force there may be in this, I think the Reaſons our Saviour gives, do much better explain his meaning: *Make not my Father's Houſe a Houſe of Merchandiſe*, John 2. 16. and *it is written, My Houſe ſhall be called a Houſe of Prayer, but ye have made it a Den of Thieves*, *Matth.* 21. 13. Which Reaſons have no relation to the typical State of the *Jewiſh* Temple, but equally concern all Places, which are the Houſe of God, and the Houſe of Prayer; that is, where God vouchſafes his peculiar Preſence to hear our Prayers.

And indeed, when Chriſt expreſſed ſo much Zeal for the Houſe of God, when the typical Glory of the *Jewiſh* Temple was at an end, having received its Accompliſhment in his own Perſon,

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it is a very good Reaſon to believe, that he intended this as a ſtanding Rule for the Religious Uſe of all Chriſtian Churches and Oratories: I am ſure the Reaſon is univerſal and unanſwerable, that the Houſe of God, which is a Houſe of Prayer, ought not to be prophaned by any common Uſes.

3*dly*. Let us worſhip in the Beauty of Holineſs; that is, let us reſort to the Houſe of God, to the Houſe of Prayer, there to offer up our Prayers and Thankſgivings to him. For if God have a Houſe, where he has promiſed his peculiar Preſence to hear our Prayers, that is the proper and peculiar Place of Worſhip. The Scripture makes it a very material Circumſtance of Worſhip to approach God's Houſe, to enter into his Courts, to come into his Preſence, to own our ſelves his Servants and Worſhippers; and without diſparaging private Prayers, or Cloſet and Family Devotions, there is no reaſon to think God will own thoſe for his Worſhippers, who deny him this publick Homage.

There is no doubt, but God knows our Prayers, where-ever we make them, for

for he knows our very Thoughts; but to hear Prayers, signifies a gracious and favourable Acceptance; and this no Man can promise himself, who will not pray, where God has promised to hear.

All the Promises of the Gospel are originally made to the Christian Church, the Body of Christ, and to particular Christians, as Members of, and in Communion with the Christian Church. But those cannot pretend to be in Communion with the Church, who never Communicate with it; who, though they form no Schism, yet withdraw themselves from its Publick Assemblies, and will either be no Christians (which I fear is too often the Case) or will be Christians by themselves. Now if they know of any Promises made to them in this single Capacity, let them take the Comfort of it; for my part I know of none. Those who live in Communion with the Church, and serve God in his House, as oft as Leisure and Opportunity will permit, may expect a Gracious Return to their Private Prayers, which are offered to God in the Name of Christ, and in the Communion of the Church; but

but this is no Encouragement to those, who set up Private Devotions against Publick Worship.

4*thly*. Let us worship the Lord in the *Beauty of Holiness*; that is, when we approach the House of God, let us take care to worship him: This is the proper Work of the Place; we have no other Business here; and it is Prophaneness not to do it. There is no Reverence due to the House, as I observed before, but there is to that God who dwells in it. When *Moses* and *Joshua* were commanded to put off their Shoes, because the Ground was Holy, it was not to worship the Ground, but that God who was present there. And for the same Reason, if we believe the Presence of God in Christian Churches, it will not only justifie, but require all the visible Signs of a Religious Reverence, that to uncover the Head, and bow the Body may escape the Censure of Superstition or Idolatry.

And while we are in the House and Presence of God, especially in time of Worship, we must carefully abstain from all irreverent Behaviour, Laughing,

Laughing, Whiſpering, Talking, or any ſuch Indecencies, as unbecoming the Preſence of a Prince, or any Superiours, much more the Preſence of God.

And yet this is too familiar a Practice, and that among ſome, who if they have no ſenſe of, or Reverence for the Divine Preſence themſelves, yet in good Manners and common Prudence, ought not to affront Chriſtian Aſſemblies, nor ſet ſuch a ſcandalous Example to others. What St. *Paul* ſaid to the *Corinthians* concerning their irreverent Behaviour at the Lord's Supper, is very applicable to theſe Men: Have ye not Houſes to converſe, and talk, and laugh in, or deſpiſe ye the Church and Preſence of God?

And when we approach the Houſe of God, let us heartily joyn in all the parts of Worſhip, with Attention of Mind, and fervent Paſſions. This becomes the Place, and the Preſence we are in. We come to worſhip God; and not to worſhip him is a Contempt, and a Contempt put upon him in his own Preſence.

And truly I know not how to excuſe thoſe from this Contempt, who turn their Backs upon any part of the Chriſtian

ſtian Worſhip. You may eaſily gueſs what I mean: Is Communicating at the Lord's Table any Part of the Chriſtian Worſhip? Nay, is it not the principal Part of it? How comes it to paſs then, that when our Churches are crowded at Prayers or Sermons, the Table of the Lord is deſerted? Certainly if Chriſt be ever preſent with us, it is in this Myſterious Supper: Why then do we fly from the Preſence of our Lord? Why do we approach his Houſe, and refuſe to eat and drink at his Table, though he offers us the deareſt Pledges of his Love, his Fleſh to eat, and his Blood to drink?

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XIV.

Preach'd at *St. Paul's* Cathedral, *November* 22. 1699. Being the Anniversary Meeting of the Lovers of Musick.

Psalm LXXXI. 1, 2.

Sing aloud unto God our strength, make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a Psalm, and bring hither the Timbrel, the pleasant Harp, with the Psaltery.

TO Praise God is acknowledged by all men to be the most Excellent part of Divine Worship; it is the Religion of happy Creatures, and the Natural Homage due to Infinite Goodness, which is the most Glorious Perfection of the Deity. It exercises the best Passions of our Souls in the most perfect manner, *Love*, *Joy*, *Reverence*, *Admiration*, which are the proper Passions of Devotion, made for God, who is their last Object; and made for the

praiſe of God, which is their moſt perfect Exerciſe. We cannot well conceive, what other Acts of Religion can be proper for Heaven; when we ſhall be advanced to the utmoſt perfection of our Natures; when we ſhall have put of Mortality and Corruption, and all other wants with them; when a Complete and Conſummate Happineſs ſhall leave no more place for Deſire; when we ſhall have nothing more to ask of God, nothing more to expect, but the ſecure Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of thoſe Pleaſures which fill but never ſatiate; which are Eternally repeated, and are Eternally New and Freſh; I ſay in ſuch a State as this, as Faith will be turned into Sight, and Hope into Enjoyment; ſo Prayer alſo, which is ſo great a part of the Worſhip of Sinners, and indigent Creatures, will be all turned into Thankſgiving and Praiſe. Now as for this reaſon St. *Paul* preſers Charity before Faith and Hope; becauſe, though they are admirable Graces for the ſtate of Chriſtians in this World, and abſolutely neceſſary to carry us to Heaven; yet they cannot enter into Heaven themſelves, where Charity attains its greateſt Glory and Perfection;

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ſo by the ſame Reaſon it appears, that Praiſe and Thankſgiving is the moſt excellent part of Worſhip, becauſe this is the Religion of Heaven, and therefore ought to be the chief Delight and Entertainment of thoſe who hope to go to Heaven.

But what is it to praiſe God? Is it only *to ſing aloud, and to make a joyful noiſe to God?* Does it conſiſt meerly in the Harmonious Melody of Voices, and Muſical Inſtruments? Does he praiſe God beſt, who compoſes the beſt Anthems, or ſings them beſt? Or do we think, that we then praiſe God beſt, when we feel our ſelves the moſt tranſported and raviſhed with excellent Muſick, performed by the beſt Voices, the choiceſt Inſtruments, and the greateſt Maſters? This is a very eaſy and a pleaſant way of praiſing God, if this would carry us to Heaven; but this is only to praiſe the Muſick, the Compoſition, or the Performance, when we think of nothing elſe, come for no other end, and mean no more by it. I would not have you miſtake me; I do not appear in this place at this time to decry or diſparage the uſe of Muſick in the Worſhip of God, which would neither become this Preſence, nor my own

Character; but to perswade and direct you to turn the Delights and Charms of Musick, into the Raptures of Devotion which would the most effectually silence all the Enemies of Church-Musick, and Cathedral-Worship, while as a divine Poet of our own Sings, This would visibly *turn Delight into a Sacrifice.*

Now since Musick, what ever it be, and how well soever performed, is of no use or value in Religion, but as it serves the true ends of Devotion; we must enquire, *What that Harmony and Melody is which is so acceptable to God; How fit External and Sensible Melody is to promote this; and how it may and ought to be improved to that purpose.*

1. As for the first, I need not tell any Man, who understands the Nature of Christian Worship, that it is only they Melody of the Heart, as St. *Paul* speakes, that pleaseth God; All true Christian Worship, whatever the externals of it are, is the Worship of the Mind and Spirit. This alone is that Worship which it becomes a reasonable Creature to pay to his Maker, his Sovereign Lord and Saviour, as the Blessed Virgin sang, *My Soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced*

joiced in God my Saviour. For it is the Mind only that can praiſe God, though the tongue muſt ſing his Praiſes. The beſt compoſed Hymns, the moſt Muſical Inſtruments, the moſt Charming Voices, are but lifeleſs Mechanical Sounds, till they are Animated and Inſpired by the Devotion of the Heart; and God takes no more pleaſure in the beſt Voices, than in bodily ſtrength or beauty. Now the Melody of the Heart, is the Conſent and Harmony of all the Powers and Paſſions of our Souls in the Praiſes of God. When Love, and Joy, and Admiration, and the profoundeſt Reverence bear their ſeveral Parts, and offer up our whole Souls as a Living Vocal Hymn of Praiſe: Then we ſing aloud in our Hearts to God, when we feel the greateſt Tranſports and Extaſies of theſe Divine Paſſions, which ſwallow us up in God, and unite us to the Heavenly Quire: Then we ſing with true Melody in our Hearts to God, when theſe Divine Paſſions, which are Eſſential to Praiſe and Thankſgiving, charm all our earthly Paſſions into a Calm; quiet all their Storms and Tumults; leave no jarring Diſcords, no Diſcontents, no Sollicitous Cares, no Jealouſies

sies, no Envyings, to discompose the Harmony of our Souls, which must be all Peace, all Love, all Joy, to sing with a true Divine Melody the Praises of God. This, and nothing else, is the true Praise of God, when our minds are filled with such bright Ideas of his Glory and Perfections, with such a lively Sense of his Majesty, Wisdom, Goodness, Power, discover'd in his great and wonderful Works of Creation, Providence, and the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ, as transport us with Love, Admiration, and Joy. A Heart thus full of God, will break forth into Songs of Praise; *When the Fire is kindled within*, as the Psalmist observes from his own Experience, *we shall then speak with our Tongues*; Here our Praises ought to begin, to be sure here they must always end, in the Heat and fervour of our Affections, and an inward feeling of the Divine Praises, if we would have them an acceptable Worship of God. As far as the Harmony of Voices or Musical Instruments serve this End, they are excellent Helps to Devotion; but it is only their Subserviency to the Devotion of the Mind, which gives them any Value, or allows

lows them any Place in Religious Worſhip.

2dly. Let us then conſider of what Uſe Muſick is to excite and quicken our Affections, and to give a new Life and Spirit to Devotion. Man is not all Soul and Spirit, but a compound Creature, conſiſting of Soul and Body; and while our Souls are vitally united to Bodies, they receive moſt of their Paſſions from them; at leaſt feel the moſt ſtrong and vigorous Motions from thoſe Impreſſions which our Senſes make; and Sight it ſelf does not more variouſly affect our Minds than Hearing does; Words and Sounds have very powerful Charms, and give as quick a Turn to our Thoughts and Paſſions, as Sight it ſelf, and not only Words but even a diverſity of Sounds, are fitted by Nature to expreſs, and to excite very different Paſſions. Love, Joy, Admiration, Deſire, Fear, Sorrow, Indignation, Revenge, give ſome diſtinguiſhing Notes and Accents to the very Voice, which no Art, but Nature teaches, and which betrays the Paſſion without ſpeaking a Word; And ſuch different Notes will alſo as forcibly imprint ſuch Paſſions on our

Minds, as they naturally represent, and that many times whether we will or no; which is a great Secret in Nature, and shews an unaccountable Sympathy between Sounds and Passions; which are by turns the Natural effects and causes of each other: and there needs no other proof what the natural power of Musick must be, to raise and to calm our Passions; and the Experience of all Mankind tells us, that thus it is; when the Composer knows how to fit Notes to Passions; which the Knowledge of Humane Nature, not the meer proportion of Sounds must teach him. Without this a fine piece of Musick is like a company of fine Words put together, without any great Sense or Meaning; they make a fine Sound, and that is all.

Now if there be a Natural Sympathy, and mutual Causality between Sounds and Passions, there is no doubt, but true Devotional Musick will Excite or Heighten our Devotional Passions, as we daily see and complain, that wanton and amorous Airs are apt to kindle wanton Fires; for Nature will act like it self, whether you apply it to good or to bad purposes. If there be no force in Musick to give a good or bad tincture to the

the Mind, why do any Men complain of wanton Songs? They may then blame the Poet, but neither the Compoſer nor Singer; for the Muſick, it ſeems, does no hurt: if there be, Why do they condemn Church-Muſick, which will have as good an Influence upon a devout Mind, as the other has a bad One?

Why then ſhould any Man think Muſick improper for the worſhip of God? It is a Natural Power, though improved by Art, as moſt other natural Powers are; and all Natural Powers are made for the Worſhip and Service of God, as far as they are capable of ſerving him; which Muſick is in a very high Degree, if it have ſuch a Natural Power over our Paſſions, as to Increaſe and Actuate, though it can't create Devotion.

Both Poetry and Muſick were originally uſed to celebrate the Praiſes of God; loſt their Glory, when they deſcended to meaner Subjects, but were prophaned by a proſtitution to men's Luſts and Vices. The firſt account we have of ſinging, is the Song of *Moſes*, Exod. 15. when God had made the Children of *Iſrael* to paſs through the Red-

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Sea on dry ground, and had drowned the *Ægyptians*; and we can't have a more ancient Account than this, which is the most ancient History in the World. And throughout the Old Testament, both Vocal and Instrumental Musick, was not only used in the Worship of God; but this was the Chief, if not the only Use of it. This is acknowledged by all; but some will not allow it to be a Pattern for Christian Worship. They reckon Musick among the Ceremonies of the *Jewish* Law, fitted to the carnal State of that People, and abrogated with the other Legal Ceremonies, by the more perfect Dispensation of the Gospel, which requires a more Spiritual Worship. But a few words will shew, how unreasonable this Pretence is.

The Song of *Moses* and *Miriam* was before the giving of the Law, and therefore no part of it; and though this is the first time we read of Singing, there is no Reason to think, that this was the first beginning of it. We read of no Institution of Singing, though we do of Singers; that Singing seems as Ancient and Natural, as publick Worship.

But suppose Singing had been part of the Mosaical Law; the Gospel of our Sav-

Saviour abrogates nothing of that Law, but ſuch Types as receive their accompliſhment in Chriſt, or ſuch Appendant Ceremonies as were meer Signs and Figures of an Evangelical Righteouſneſs: But what is Singing a Type of any more than ſpeaking? For it is only a more Harmonious and Emphatical way of ſpeaking; and I ſee no Reaſon, why Men may not reject Vocal Prayer, as well as Vocal Muſick, becauſe they were both uſed by the *Jews*. Whatever Objections are now made againſt Church-Muſick, which I have not now time particularly to examine, were as good Objections in *David*'s time, as they are now; and yet then Prophets compoſed Hymns, and Prophets ſet the Tunes; for ſo the chief Muſitians to whom *David* directs his Pſalms, as the Titles of ſome of them expreſs, were Prophets as well as Muſitians; and methinks Men ſhould ſpeak more favourably of ſuch Practices as were under the Direction and Government of Inſpired Men.

In the Viſion of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, 6 Ch. 1, 2, 3. *v.* The Seraphims are repreſented *crying one to another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hoſts, Heaven and Earth are full of his Glory.* This is ac-

acknowledged to be a great Example of Antiphonal singing, in which one answers another. But then they say, this *plainly refers to the Ancient Temple-Worship, and must not be admitted a Precedent for Christian Practice.* But if the Temple-Worship be a fit Precedent for the Worship of Angels, Why may it not be a Precedent for the Worship of Christians? whose Worship as pure and Spiritual as it is, falls vastly short of Angelical Worship. But do not the Angels then thus Worship God in Heaven? this would be a new Objection against our Liturgy, never thought of before, which in the *Te Deum* teaches us to Sing, *To Thee all Angels cry aloud, the Heavens and all the Powers therein.*

To Thee Cherubin and Seraphin continually do cry.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabbaoth.

Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory.

And if the Angels thus sing in Heaven, surely the Precedent is not unworthy of the Christian Church on Earth.

The like Representation we meet with of the four Beasts, and twenty four Elders, *Rev.* 4. And the same Answer is given

given to it, *That the Images in the Apocalyptick Viſions are fetched from the Law, and not from the Goſpel.* But whenſoever theſe Images were originally taken, this Book was directed to the Chriſtian Churches, and therefore was a Rule and Precedent for them. It all along deſcribes the State of the *Chriſtian*, not of the *Jewiſh* Church, and therefore their Worſhip too: And if we look into the fifth Chapter, we ſhall find theſe four Beaſts, and twenty four Elders were Chriſtians, who were redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, and ſung the Song of the Lamb; *Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof; for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt Redeemed us to God out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, and haſt made us unto our God Kings and Prieſts, and we ſhall reign upon the Earth,* Ver. 9, 10. This I take to be a Chriſtian Hymn, and therefore a Pattern for Chriſtian Worſhip.

And as much as ſome ſmile at the Conceit, I can't but think, that the general Exhortations in the new Teſtament, to ſing to God, *To admoniſh one another in Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Singing and making Melody in*

in our Hearts to the Lord; though the are not an Apostolical Institution of Quire, nor do prescribe the particula Forms of Cathedral Worship; yet the justifie it all, as far as it is fitted to th true Ends of Devotion; for the Apostle knew after what manner they sung i the *Jewish* Church; and had this bee so unfit, as is pretended for Christia Worship, they would not have exhort ed Christians to sing, without giving them a Caution against *Jewish* Singing.

And now it does not seem to me much to the purpose, to enquire whe ther this Practice was for any time in termitted in the Christian Church and When, and upon what Occasion i was Restored; For if what I have now discourſed hold good, it justifies the Use of Musick in Religious Worship, when ever it can be had; though there may be some Times and Circumstances, which will not allow it. Though it could be certainly proved, that this was disused for the first three Centuries in the Christian Church, while they were under a state of Persecution: This would be no greater Argument to me against Cathedral-Worship, than it is against Cathedral Churches: The Poverty and

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afflicted State of the Church at that time would allow neither; but Proſperity by degrees reſtored them to both. We may as well argue againſt the Uſe of Muſick in the *Jewiſh* Church, becauſe under the *Babyloniſh* Captivity they hung their Harps upon the Willows, and refuſed to ſing the Songs of *Sion* in a ſtrange Land, to thoſe who carried them away Captives. The Primitive Chriſtians in thoſe days never declared their diſlike of this way of Worſhip, but their Condition would not bear it. No Chriſtian will deny, that ſinging the Praiſes of God and their Saviour, was always a principal part of Chriſtian Worſhip, and therefore was the worſhip of the Primitive Chriſtians, unleſs they were defective in a Principal part of Worſhip; ſo that the only Diſpute can be about the manner of Singing; and the chief thing objected, is the *Antiphonal way of ſinging*; which is acknowledged to have been uſed in the *Jewiſh* Church, and therefore has the ſame Authority that Singing has: But yet I will yield the Cauſe, if any Man can give me a good Reaſon, why it ſhould be very Lawful, and an excellent part of Religion, for a hundred Men, ſuppoſe, to ſing

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a whole Psalm together; but very Unlawful, and a Corruption of Religion, to sing it Alternately; Fifty to sing One Verse, and Fifty the Next; when by their Answering each other, they mutually excite each other's Devotion, and signifie the Consent and Union of their Prayers and Praises in the Whole.

But setting aside the afflicted State of the Christian Church, the Profes'd Enemies of Cathedral-Worship allow us as Great and Early Authorities as we desire. St. *Basil*, St. *Ambrose*, and St. *Chrysostom*, always will be Venerable Names. The Church was restored to Peace but in the Fourth Century, and then this Worship revived, and that by the Authority and Example of as Great and Good Men as any the Church had.

That *Erasmus* himself, and many Reformers, were great Enemies to this way of Worship, as it was then practised in the Church of *Rome*, is no great Wonder, when their Hymns, as well as their Prayers, being performed in an unknown Tongue, all their Singing was meer Noise, which could contribute nothing to Devotion. But this

this is no greater Argument againſt our *Engliſh* Hymns and Anthems, than againſt our *Engliſh* Prayers. If they meant any thing more we muſt demand their Reaſons: For as for Authority, our own Reformers and Reformation have, and that deſervedly, a much greater Authority in the World.

But I muſt haſten to a Concluſion: Which brings me to the Third Thing I propoſed, How Muſick may, and ought to be improved to the Purpoſes of Devotion: And here I muſt beg leave to ſpeak ſomething briefly to Three Sorts of Men; *Compoſers*, *Singers*, and *Hearers*; which will ſerve for the Application of the Whole.

Firſt, As for Compoſers, Thoſe who ſet our Hymns and Anthems to Muſical Notes. I do not pretend to Skill in Muſick, much leſs to be able to Teach ſuch great Maſters as this Age hath bred; but I hope in ſome Meaſure I do, and may be allowed to Underſtand and Teach Devotion, which is all I intend in this; for that which according to all the Rules of Art muſt be allowed for excellent Muſick, may not always be proper for Devotion.

It is a great Mistake in Composing Hymns and Anthems, to consider only what Notes are Musical, and will Delight and Entertain the Hearers: The true Rule is, What Notes are most proper to Excite or Quicken such Passions of Devotion, as the Words of the Hymn or Anthem Express. This indeed can't be done without Skill in Musick, but true Devotion is the best Director of that Skill; for a Devout Mind will judge of the Devotion, as a Skilful Ear does of the Musick of Sounds: That the most certain way for the greatest Masters to Compose such Hymns and Anthems as are fit for the Worship of God, and may best serve the Devotions of Christians, is to work their own Minds first into all those Heights and Flames of Devotion, which they are to Express in Sounds; which they will find a double Advantage in; it will make them Good Christians, and Admirable Composers of Church-Musick.

A Devout Ear without any great Skill in Musick, soon finds the want of this.

A Grave, Serious Mind, which is the true Temper of Devotion, is disturbed

ed by Light and Airy Compositions, which disperse the Thoughts, and give a Gay and Frisking Motion to the Spirits, and call the Mind off from the Praises of God, to attend meerly to the agreeable Variety of Sounds, which is all that can be expected from such Sounds as have nothing of Devotion in them: Which is so much the worse still, when, (as is now grown very common in such Compositions) they are clogged with Needless and Endless Repetitions. A Repetition serves only to give an Emphasis, and it requires a great Judgment to place it Right; and is very absurd when it is placed Wrong: but we often see, that there is too little Regard had to this: The Skill of Altering Notes is the whole Design, which when there is not very great occasion for it, is like School-Boys Varying Phrases, or like Ringing the Changes; which how entertaining soever it be, when we have nothing to do but to attend to Sounds, is yet very Nauseous and Offensive to Devout Minds in Religious Worship. I thank God, the Ordinary Service of our Church is very Grave and Solemn, and well fitted to Devotion: And as for more Modern Com-

positions, the Governours of Churches ought to take care to receive nothing into the Worship of God, but what is fitted to serve Devotion; and this would effectually answer the greatest Objections against Church-Musick.

Secondly, As for those who are Employed in Singing the Church-Service and Anthems, to assist the Devotions of the Congregation, it certainly becomes them to behave themselves very Devoutly in it. Musical Instruments, which have no Life and Sense, may Minister to our Devotions, though they are capable of none themselves; but it gives great Offence and Scandal, to see those who are daily employed in Singing Praises to God, to shew no Signs of Devotion in themselves, much more by an Irreverent Behaviour to betray great Symptoms of want of Devotion. I thank God we have no great reason to make this Complaint in this Church, and, I hope, shall every day have less; but this is a good occasion to mind all such Persons, how Devout they ought to be, (if Musick be a Help to Devotion;) who have this Advantage from Art and Nature, first to Excite their own De-

Devotions, and then to Aſſiſt the Devotions of others; which laſt muſt be a very taſteleſs uneaſie Employment, if they have no Devotion of their own: And a great Reproach alſo to their Art, when they themſelves are Witneſſes, how little Devotion it Teaches.

But there is one thing, which I believe is not ſo well conſidered, which yet is juſt Matter of Scandal; for thoſe who Sing Divine Hymns and Anthems at Church, and whoſe Profeſſion it is to do ſo, to Sing Wanton and Amorous, Lewd, Atheiſtical Songs out of it. Men, who have enter'd themſelves into the Service of the Church, have Conſecrated their Voices to God; not ſo, as never to Sing any thing elſe but Hymns and Anthems, but yet ſo as never to Sing any thing to the Reproach of God, Religion, or Vertue. This unbecomes any Man, who calls himſelf a Chriſtian, much more thoſe whoſe peculiar Employment it is to Sing the Praiſes of God.

Thirdly, As for Hearers, they ought alſo to conſider, That their Buſineſs at Church, is not meerly to be Entertained with Muſick, but to Exerciſe their

Devotions, which is the true End of Church-Musick; to Praise God with the more fervent Passions. It is a Contempt of Religion, and of the House of God, to come only to please our Ears, to hear Better Voices, and more Curious Compositions, and more Artful Singing than we can meet with in other Places.

This I have reason to fear is the Case of very many who resort hither; who, especially on the Lord's-Day, Crowd into the Church to hear the Anthem, and when that is over, to the great Disturbance of the Worship of God, and the Scandal of all good Christians, Crowd as fast out again. Though there is this good in it, that they make Room for Devouter People, who immediately fill up their Places, to attend the Instructions of God's Word. But I hope this will not be charged upon the Service of our Church, that Men who have no Devotion, come only for Musick: For Church-Musick can't create Devotion, tho' it may improve it where it is.

But indeed we ought all to be aware that the Musick does not Employ

ploy our Thoughts more than our Devotions; which it can never do, if as Common Senſe teaches us it ought to be, our Minds be in the firſt place fix'd and intent upon the Praiſes of God, which are expreſs'd in the Hymn or Anthem; which when conveyed unto us in Muſical Sounds, will give Life and Quickneſs to our Devotions; not firſt fixed on the Muſick, which moſt probably will leave the Devotion of the Anthem behind it. Thoſe who find that Muſick does not Aſſiſt but Stifle their Devotion, and many ſuch there may be, had much better keep to their Pariſh-Churches, and prefer Devotion before Muſick. For to come to Church without any Intention to Worſhip God in his own Houſe, or to pretend to Worſhip him without Devotion, are great Affronts to the Divine Majeſty.

In a word: Thoſe who profeſs themſelves *Lovers of Muſick*, ought to conſider, what the true End of Muſick is, and to improve it to the Nobleſt Purpoſes. The meer Harmony of Sounds is a very pleaſant and innocent Entertainment: Of all the De-

lights of Sense, this is in it self the least sensual, when it is not abused to recommend Vice, and to convey impure Images to our Minds: But yet meerly to be delighted with Charming and Musical Aires, does not answer the true Character of *a Lover of Musick*: For it is the least thing in Musick to please the Ear; its proper, natural Use, and the great Advantage and Pleasure of it, relates to our Passions: To Compose, to Soften, to Inflame them; and the Diviner Passions it inspires us with, the more it is to be admired and valued, and then Musick must attain its greatest Glory and Perfection in true Devotion: That *the Lovers of Musick* ought to be very Devout Men, if they love Musick for that which is most valuable in it, and its last and noblest End.

To conclude:

It concerns the Lovers of Musick to vindicate it from all Prophane Abuses; not to suffer so Divine a thing to be prostituted to Mens Lusts: To discountenance all Lewd, Prophane, Atheistical Songs, how admirable soever the Composition be: To preserve

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Muſick in its Virgin Modeſty, and without confining her always to the Temple, make the Praiſes of God her Chief Employment, as it is her greateſt Glory.

Thus have I ſpoke my Mind very freely; ſhewed you the Uſe and the Abuſes of Muſick, which was one great Inducement to me to comply with the Deſires of thoſe Honourable and Worthy Perſons, who impoſed this Office on me, that I might have an Opportunity of Saying that which I thought fit ſhould be ſaid at one time or other, and for ſaying of which, there could not be a more proper Occaſion than this.

And I hope this may plead my Excuſe with all good Chriſtians if it have drawn my Sermon out to too great a Length, and given too long an Interruption to the Entertainment of thoſe, the leaſt part of whoſe Buſineſs it was to hear a Sermon.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and ever. Amen.

SER-

SERMON XV.

Preach'd before the QUEEN at *White Hall* in *Lent*.

2 Tim. iii. *ver.* 1, 2.

This know alſo, that in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come: For men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves.

IS *Self-love* then ſo dangerous a thing, as to make the Times perilous? What Times then can be proſperous and happy? What Age produces ſuch Monſters as do not love themſelves? And where is the Man that would be contented to live in ſuch an Age?

The Apoſtle then, by the *Lovers of their own ſelves*, cannot mean all thoſe who are acted by this natural Principle of *Self-love* to take care of their own Happi-

Happineſs; for that is all Mankind, in all Ages of the World, and cannot be the Character only of the *laſt Days*, nor the cauſe of *perillous Times*.

Self-love is the very Life and Spirit of the reaſonable World, which has no other Spring of Motion: It unites Men into Societies, is the Parent of all Arts and Sciences; it makes us take care of our ſelves, and it teaches us to do good to others: It is no Vertue it ſelf, becauſe it is not Matter of our choice, but as neceſſary as our Being; but it is the Seed and Principle of all Moral Vertues, as it obliges us to make our ſelves happy, to preſerve our Health, to encreaſe our Fortunes, to gain the Good-will and good Opinion of our Neighbours, to be eaſie to our ſelves, and to make the World eaſie to us; which requires the Practice of all healthful, thriving, and ſociable Virtues.

It is *Self-love* which inſpires us with that Divine Principle of Univerſal Goodneſs and Charity, to do to other Men, what we deſire they ſhould do to us: It is this which makes us ſoft and tender to all the Impreſſions of Kindneſs, which makes us feel other Mens Sufferings, and other Mens Reſentments in

our

our own; which makes us reliſh the Sweetneſs and Pleaſure of doing Good, by the Pleaſure of receiving it, and gives us an Antipathy and Abhorrence of doing Injuries, from our natural Averſion to ſuffer them.

It is this *Self-love* which makes Mankind governable, and ſecures the Peace and good Order of Humane Societies. Humane Laws would ſignifie very little without Rewards and Puniſhments, and Rewards and Puniſhments would ſignifie as little as Laws without *Self-love*: For could Men be unconcerned for themſelves; did they neither hope nor fear any thing, they could be governed only as Beaſts are, by external Force. It is the love of our ſelves, which makes us delight in Humane Converſation, and promote the Publick Good, wherein all Mens private Fortunes are involved.

In a word: This *Self-love* is the Principle of all Religion, which teaches us to love and worſhip God, who is eternal and eſſential Love and Goodneſs; to praiſe him for our Being, for our Preſervation, for all the Enjoyments of this Life, and for the great Hopes and Expectations of the next: It teaches us to reverence his Laws, to fear his Juſtice and

and Power, to depend on his Providence, to pray for the Supply of our Wants, and for the Pardon of our Sins. It gives Virtue and Efficacy to Faith and Hope, which are the great Gospel-Principles of Obedience: For what would the belief and expectation of unseen Glories signifie, if Men were not concerned to make themselves eternally happy? So wild and extravagant is that Enthusiastick Conceit of serving God without respect to the Recompence of Reward; which contradicts the whole Scope of the Gospel, all the Motives, and all the Principles of Evangelical Obedience, the Examples of all good Men, and of Christ himself, *who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despised the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of God.*

This is sufficient to prove, that St. *Paul* did not intend to condemn all *Self-love*, which when it acts regularly is the natural Principle of all Moral and Religious Actions; and having prevented this Objection, which lay in my way, for the further Explication and Improvement of these Words, I shall do these three Things.

I. In-

1. Inquire what that *Self-love* is, which the Apoſtle here condemns.

2. How dangerous and perillous ſuch Times muſt needs be, wherein this *Self-love* prevails.

3. Shew the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs, as well as Wickedneſs and Impiety of it.

1. What that *Self-love* is which the Apoſtle condemns. For can *Self-love* be the fruitful Parent of all Piety and Virtue, and the cauſe of all the Evil and Wickedneſs which is committed in the World? Can the ſame Fountain ſend forth ſweet water and bitter? and yet thus we ſee it is, both good and bad Men act from a Principle of *Self-love*, and deſign their own happineſs and ſatisfaction. This inſpires good Men with great and generous deſigns, ſets them above this World, makes them devout Worſhippers of God, and very juſt and charitable to Men: and it is the ſame Principle which acts in bad Men, and drives them into all the Exceſſes of wickedneſs; they gratifie their own Inclinations

ons and Appetites by it; they find present Ease and Pleasure; they do what they love, they please themselves; they pursue what they call Happiness, which is *Self-love* still, though turned off of its natural Byas by mistaken Notions of Happiness.

All Men love themselves; but *Self-love* does not act alike in all Men, because they are not all agreed what Self to love: For Man consists of Soul and Body, of Spirit and Flesh, which have different Interests, Appetites, and Inclinations, and have distinct Pleasures and Satisfactions of their own. A good Man loves his whole Self, Soul and Body too, and designs and endeavours the Happiness of both, which is the entire Happiness of a Man; and this is a vertuous *Self-love*, which makes the Flesh subordinate to the Spirit, governs our sensual Appetites by Reason, improves our Minds in Wisdom and Knowledge, raises our Souls up to God, and entertains them with the love and the admiration of that best of Beings; and above all things, secures an eternal Interest, the Salvation of our Souls, and the glorious Resurrection of our Bodies into immortal Life.

But

But a Bad Man loves but one part of himſelf, and that the meaneſt part too, and made much more mean and vile by being loved alone. His *Self-love* is nothing elſe but the love of the Fleſh, and of the Luſts, and Appetites and Pleaſures of it, a love of this World, and all the objects of Senſe, which gratifie a carnal and fleſhly Mind; the Soul is no part of his care, ſo far from it, that he is not willing to believe he has a Soul, unleſs it be to ſubdue Reaſon to Senſe and brutiſh Paſſions, to ſtifle the natural notions of a Deity, to root up all the ſeeds of Piety and Vertue, or to charm his Conſcience that it may not chide and condemn, and diſturb him in his Enjoyments.

For the underſtanding of this we muſt obſerve, that when the Scripture condemns the love of our ſelves, it does not mean our Perſonal Self, for ſo every man does, and muſt love himſelf or his own Perſon, but it is to love ſomething for our ſelves, which we will have to be our ſelves, when God never made it to be ſo, which is *our own Self*, or *a Self of our own making*, and to love this Self in oppoſition to the Love of God and Men, which is to love our

ſelves *only*, and to make all other things ſubordinate to Self, which is the adequate notion of a *vitious Self-love*.

1. It is a Self of our own making, that is, it is what a Sinner will call Himſelf, and will account his whole Self; and in pleaſing of which he placeth his whole happineſs, though it be but a little part of that Self, which God made. God made Man Soul and Body, but ſuch Men will call nothing themſelves but Fleſh: God made Man for a rational and intellectual Happineſs, as he made him a reaſonable Creature; but ſuch Men place their whole Happineſs in Senſe. Now Fleſh is not the Man of Gods making; the Pleaſures of Senſe are not the Happineſs of a Man: Man was made to enjoy the Pleaſures of Senſe in conjunction with thoſe of Reaſon, and in ſubordination to the Diviner Pleaſures of the Mind; but a ſenſual Happineſs he was not made for; that's the Happineſs of an inferiour and brutiſh Nature: And thoſe who will have this to be their Self and their Happineſs, are their own Creatures, not Gods; and are lovers *of their own Selves, of their own Inventions, their own Ways and Devices*, as the Scripture ſpeaks.

2. ſuch

2. Such Men are Lovers of themſelves in oppoſition to the Love of God: that is they are *lovers of Pleaſures more than lovers of God*, as the Apoſtle here ſpeaks: They prefer their own Will and Humour and the Gratification of their Luſts before the Will and Laws of God, and in contradiction to them. A Good Man lives in ſubordination to God, as a Creature ought to do to his Maker and Sovereign Lord; the Will of God is the Rule of his Will and Choice, the Love of God gives Laws and Bounds to his Love of himſelf: He pleaſeth himſelf in ſuch Inſtances as God allows, he denies his own Will and Appetites, Inclinations and Intereſts when they oppoſe the Will and Laws of God: Such a Man can hardly be ſaid, to have any Self, to have any Will, any Love, any Deſires of his own, for God is all this to him; God lives in him, he is more Gods, than he is his own, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks. *I live, yet not I but Chriſt liveth in me*, 2 Gal. 20. But a Bad Man hath divided himſelf from God, caſt off his obedience, affects an independent State, to ſtand by himſelf, and to be his own Lord and Maſter, and a God to himſelf; and ſuch a Man

is properly ſaid to love himſelf, for he diſtinguiſhes himſelf from God, and prefers himſelf before him.

3*dly*, Such Men are properly ſaid to be Lovers of themſelves, becauſe they love themſelves in oppoſition to the reſt of Mankind; they gratifie their Luſts, and ſerve their private Intereſts, without any regard to the Laws of Ju ſtice or Charity: It is their Principle to do good to themſelves without ever being concerned, what either private Men, or publick Societies ſuffer by it: They are the whole world to themſelves, and have no body elſe to pleaſe or take care of, unleſs they can ſerve their own deſigns by it: Such men are properly Lovers of themſelves, that is, only of themſelves, for they love no body elſe: And this is the ſordid, narrow, ſelfiſh Spirit of Fleſh and Senſe, which dwells within it Self, is its own Center, and its own Circumference; for Fleſh is a narrow Principle, can have no Pleaſures nor feel any Pains but its own, and therefore muſt confine its Love and Care to its ſelf; but a Man, who has a truly great and divine mind, who loves all Men as himſelf, and loves himſelf in conjunction

on with the reſt of Mankind, can by no means be called a ſelfiſh Man, or a lover of himſelf, for he has an univerſal love to Humane Nature, which begins with himſelf, but extends to all the World.

This is a plain and ſhort account, what this *vicious Self-love* is, and why it is ſo called.

2*dly*, The Second thing I propoſed, was to ſhew how dangerous and perillous ſuch Times muſt needs be, wherein this *Self-love* Prevails. Now thoſe are perillous Times, which expoſe Men to great Dangers and to great Troubles and Calamities, and that with reſpect to their own private Fortunes, with reſpect to the Publick, and with reſpect to the State of Religion; and what a malignant influence this *vicious Self-love* has upon all theſe great and dear Intereſts, is ſo viſible, that methinks it ſhould need no proof; and therefore I ſhall at preſent only give ſome brief Hints of it.

And I ſhall not here take notice how much ſuch *Self-lovers* ſuffer from themſelves, and from their own *Self-love*; for though this makes themſelves miſerable,

it does not make the Times dangerous; the Times may be very prosperous, and good Men very happy, though such Sinners may *reap the Fruits of their own Works, and be filled with their own Devices*; though they sacrifice their Honour, their Estates, their Health, their Lives to Intemperance and Lust; though Ambition heats their brains into a Distraction, and Cares, and Disappointments break their Hearts, or Guilt disturbs their Consciences, and fills them with Rage and furious Despair; the World is not much concerned in this; let such *Self-lovers* look to it, and thank themselves for what they suffer; but then the Times are dangerous with respect to our private and personal Interests, when Men are in great danger from one another; when they are never secure from private Injuries, when they know not whom to trust, nor with whom to converse, when it is hard to find a Friend, and almost impossible to escape an Enemy; when the greatest Virtue, Innocence, Inoffenciveness, nay the Divinest Charity, and all the charms of an obliging Conversation, cannot secure Men from Envy, Rapine, and Detraction, from the Venom of Tongues, or from

from more malicious designs against their Lives and Fortunes; such a State as this will make all Good Men wish as *David* did, *O that I had wings like a Dove, for then would I flie away and be at rest; Lo then would I wander far off, and remain in the Wilderness, I would hasten my Escape from the windy Storm and Tempest.* 55 Psa. 6, 7, 8 Verses.

And this is the very State which *Self-love* puts Mankind into, when it prevails in the World. This a late admired Philosopher calls the State of Nature, wherein every Man is a Woolf to a Man, but in truth it is only the State of this *vicious Self-love* which is the Corruption and Degeneracy of a reasonable and sociable Nature. If Man was made for Society, it cannot be his Nature to love no body but himself, which is a Contradiction to the Nature and End of Societies. He must first put off Nature, if that be this *Self-love*, before he can be capable of living in Society, which seems very unaccountable, that a Creature, who was made for Society, should not be fit for Society till he change his Nature.

For Men cannot live together in safety, while they are all acted by this Prin-

ciple; *Self-love* makes every Man his own Center, and the Center draws all to it ſelf, all that is within its ſphære of activity. Pride is *Self-love*, ſuch an eſteem for our ſelves, as values no Man's Honour or Reputation but our own; and this draws all Honour to it ſelf, is not contented unleſs it can outſhine all others, and either by a greater brightneſs ſwallow them up, or eclipſe them by black and miſty Vapours, by all the Arts of Infamy and Reproach.

Covetouſneſs is *Self-love* when Men will be rich, whoever be poor, and by whatever Arts they can do it; and this draws all riches to it ſelf, and ſnatches them from all that come within its reach: and what Injuſtice and Violence, Theft, Murders, Perjuries does this occaſion.

Self-love is the love of the Fleſh, the love of carnal and ſenſual Pleaſures, which will pleaſe it ſelf whoever be grieved and injured by it: Such brutiſh Senſualiſts have no regard to the Honour and Peace of Families, to the Modeſty of Virgins, to the Sacred Vows of Wives, to the Stain and Infamy of Poſterity; nay, many times not to the dignity of Humane Nature; but gratifie their

their Luſts in contradiction to them all.

Where *Self-love* reigns, there is no place for Compaſſion, for Charity, for Juſtice, for true Friendſhip; every thing muſt give way to Self; and let any man judge whether ſuch be not perillous Times; ſome ſuch Men there are always in the World, and great numbers of them too, and we daily feel what miſcheifs they do; but the more the numbers of them encreaſe, the more this *Self-love* prevails, the more intolerable will Humane Converſation be.

And if we allow, that Pride, Ambition, Covetouſneſs, Senſuality, are great Enemies to the Peace and Proſperity, to the good Order and Government of any Nation, we muſt grant that *Self-love*, which is the impure Fountain, from whence all theſe corrupt Streams flow, is very deſtructive to Humane Societies too; it corrupts publick Juſtice, looſens the reigns of Government, ſoftens and emaſculates Mens Spirits, renders them unfit for Counſel, or for Arms; makes them contemptible to their Neighbours, and brings down the Judgments of God upon them.

Is any thing ſo deſtructive to any State

State as Diviſions and Factions at home? and was there ever any State-Faction without *Self-love* and private Intereſt at the bottom? when great Men will rival one another, and are impatient either of Superiours or Equals; and proſecute their Private Animoſities with the Publick Danger; and when common ſafety requires united Hearts and Counſels, will not adjourn their private Quarrels, nor ſacrifice their private Intereſts and Reſentments to ſave a Nation.

It is wonderful to obſerve, that when a Kingdom is divided into Parties and Factions, the moſt threatning dangers are ſo far from uniting them, that they take advantage of Publick Fears and Apprehenſions, to get ground of their Adverſaries, tho' they hazard the whole by it: and what are ſuch Factions but a Combination of *Self-lovers*, who divide themſelves from the Publick Intereſt, unleſs their Private Humours and Intrigues may take place; when a Party will be the Whole, and if others will not let them be the Whole, let the Whole, periſh.

This is the narrow, peeviſh, unſociable Spirit of *Self-love*, a temper, which generous Heathens had in the greateſt abhor-

abhorrence; and till a more publick Spirit revive in the World, we muſt never expect to ſee eaſie and happy days: The Times will be perillous, while men are ſuch Lovers of themſelves.

But how deplorable muſt the ſtate of Religion needs be, when *Self-love* prevails, which is ſuch a direct contradiction to all Piety and Virtue, to the Love of God and Men? The Apoſtle indeed tells us of theſe Lovers of themſelves, *that they have a Form of Godlineſs, but deny the Power thereof.* They make a Show of Religious Worſhip, and it may be a very glorious and pompous Show too, for this may ſerve their Intereſt, and give them Reputation with their Prince, or with the People, but their Religion has no power upon their Lives, cannot ſubdue any one Luſt, as it is impoſſible it ſhould, while they are acted by *Self-love.*

And yet it is much to be deſired, that ſuch Men would retain *a Form of Godlineſs*; that they would not publickly affront Religion, nor ridicule all that is Sacred; but it is in vain to hope for thus much from all of them. St. *Paul's* perillous Times was a very Modeſt and a very Religious Age to ours, wherein men ſeem to be aſhamed to be thought Religious

gious; and therefore if they ever think fit to go to Church, take great care that no Man, who ſees them ſhall ſuſpect, that they come thither to worſhip God.

But though few Men attain to ſuch an outragious Contempt of Religion as this, yet all the Corruptions of Religion are more owing to *Self-love* than to Innocent Miſtakes. This ſecretly influences Mens Faith, and forms their Notions and Opinions. This invents *a Form of Godlineſs*, and turns Religion into Show and Pageantry; when Men bring *Self-love* into the Church, it quickly turns true Religion out; it is Pride, and Ambition, or Covetouſneſs, and a love of ſenſual Pleaſures which makes Men Infidels and Hereticks, and occaſions all the Schiſms which divide the Church. For when ſuch *Self-lovers* cannot caſt off all Religion, they muſt fit their Religion to *Self-love*, to ſerve their Luſts, or to give them ſecurity in the Enjoyment of them; when they cannot raiſe Self up to the terms of Religion, they muſt bring Religion down to Self: It were eaſie to give undeniable Proofs, and infinite Examples of this; but I muſt proceed.—

For having ſhewn, what this *vicious Self-love*

Self-love is, and what Miſcheifs it does in the World, both to Mens private Fortunes, to publick Societies, and to the Church of God; it remains 3*dly*, To conſider the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs, as well as Impiety of this Principle. All the Wickedneſs, that is committed in the World, and moſt of the Miſeries which Mankind ſuffer, are owing to *Self-love*; and could we convince Men of the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs, and Impiety of this, it would lay the Axe to the very Root of all Wickedneſs, it would reform the World, and heal all the Maladies and Diſtempers of it: And to do this the more effectually I ſhall diſtinctly apply what I have to ſay, to the ſeveral Notions of *Self-love*.——

1. Let us conſider *Self-love*, as it ſignifies the love of Fleſh and Senſe, when we love a part of our ſelves for the whole, and expect our whole entire Happineſs from the gratification of ſome inferior Appetites, which at firſt hearing appears as abſurd and impoſſible, as it is to make a Part the Whole. The greateſt part of Mankind in all Ages have made this Experiment, but no Man was ever made happy by it. We ſee infinite Examples of miſerable Sinners and

and the moſt proſperous always find that that they want ſomething elſe to make them happy; and would Men wiſely conſider the nature of things, they would find, that it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe.

What is Happineſs, but ſuch a State of Eaſe and Reſt and Self-enjoyment, as is agreeable to our Natures? and can a reaſonable Soul then find its compleat and perfect ſatisfaction in the Pleaſures of ſenſe? the perfection and the happineſs of our Natures is the ſame thing, and therefore that which perfects our Natures, muſt perfect our Happineſs. Is Senſe then the perfection of a reaſonable Nature? if not, how can it be its perfect Happineſs? Is not Wiſdom and Knowledge the perfection of the Underſtanding? is not the love of the beſt and moſt excellent Being the perfection of the Will? and is not this the perfection of a Reaſonable Soul? and is it poſſible to make a Man happy, who feels none of thoſe divine and exalted Pleaſures, which are proper to a Mind. Well! but if the enjoyments of Senſe will give a compleat and entire ſatisfaction, that will make the Man happy, when he has no reliſh of any other Pleaſures; and then we need

need not diſpute which Pleaſures are greateſt in themſelves, when the Man has what he likes beſt, and is happy in it, which is as much as to ſay, that it makes no difference whether a Man enjoy the happineſs of a Man or of a Beaſt; that a Beaſt is as happy a Creature as a Man, a Worm as an Angel, becauſe it has what ſatisfies, and wants and deſires no more. But however let us conſider whether the pleaſures of Senſe can give perfect eaſe and ſatisfaction to a reaſonable Soul; that they do not all Men find, and the reaſon why they cannot do it is very plain.

The Pleaſures of Senſe cannot give perfect eaſe and ſatisfaction without a full, unconfined, and undiſturbed Enjoyment, and without ſuch an Enjoyment as equals the Deſire.

As for the firſt, not to take notice how apt Men are to be diſturbed in their Enjoyments from without, there is enough within the very Frame and Conſtitution of a Reaſonable Soul do diſturb them: For they find there a Natural Senſe of the difference between Good and Evil, a Natural Modeſty which makes them bluſh in ſecret at ſome infamous Vices, and ſours the Pleaſures, and frequently interrupts

terrupts the commiſſion of them; a natural belief of a God, who is the Judge of the World, and the Avenger of all wickedneſs; a ſtrong perſwaſion, that they ſhall live after death, and be rewarded and puniſhed according to their works: I need not tell you, how uneaſie ſuch thoughts as theſe make the enjoyment of all ſenſual pleaſures, and an uneaſy Happineſs is a contradiction; that if God intended Man for a Senſual Happineſs, I muſt confeſs he is the worſt contrived Creature in the world, as if he were made by chance, not by a wiſe Creator; for the Principles of his nature diſturb and contradict the enjoyment of his natural Happineſs. Or whether you will call this Nature or Education, or what you pleaſe, there are very few Men, with the help of all the Wit and Philoſophy of Atheiſts, can deliver themſelves from this Belief, and from theſe Fears; and much fewer do it, than pretend to do ſo; and therefore there are very few who have an eaſy and undiſturb'd Enjoyment of Senſual Pleaſures, that is, who are eaſy and happy in them, unleſs to ſin with Fear, with Shame, with Guilty Remorſe, with frightful Preſages of judgment, be an eaſy and undiſturb'd Enjoyment.

As

As for the Second it is very plain, that the Enjoyment of Senſual Pleaſures can never anſwer the vaſt and boundleſs Deſires of Happineſs in Humane Nature; a reaſonable and intelligent Being has no other bounds to its Deſires of Happineſs, but the moſt perfect and perpetual Enjoyment, whereas Senſual Pleaſures beſides all other Diſappointments, muſt wait the Returns of Strength and Appetite and Objects, and therefore cannot always be had, or cannot always pleaſe. Senſual Pleaſures can never be the Happineſs of any Creature, which has any higher Principle then Appetite, for Appetite is the utmoſt bounds of Senſual Enjoyments; but when Knowledge ſerves inſtead of Appetite, as it muſt do in Reaſonable Creatures, it creates ſuch Deſires as no Appetites can anſwer: This makes Senſual Men ſo inſatiable in their Deſires of Pleaſure, though Bruit Beaſts know their Meaſures, becauſe they miſplace their Natural Deſires of Happineſs, which are boundleſs and infinite upon Senſual Pleaſures, which are limited and confined: and what Diſappointments and Diſtractions muſt this create, when there is no proportion

between the Deſire and the Object, beſides thoſe Senſible Miſchiefs of it, which do not much contribute to their Happineſs. For when Deſire forces an Appetite, beyond the Strength of Nature, and the Natural End and Uſe of ſuch Pleaſures, it impairs their Health, weakens their Bodies, ſhortens their Lives, or makes them miſerable, which are the common Rewards of Intemperance and Luſt. Theſe Beaſts, who are governed by Appetite, know nothing of; Senſe is their Happineſs, and Appetite is the Meaſure of their Enjoyment, and Senſual Pleaſures can fill and ſatisfie a meer Senſual Appetite; but when Knowledge is both the Reaſon and the Meaſure of our Deſires, Senſual Pleaſures can never fill ſuch Deſires; for we know more than Nature it ſelf can enjoy, and yet when we place our higheſt Happineſs in it, muſt deſire all we know; and as long as we know, which is longer than we can enjoy: This proves that nothing can be the Happineſs of a knowing and reaſonable Creature, but Intellectuall Pleaſures, where Knowledge is Enjoyment, and then Enjoyment will equal Knowledge and Deſire; but when

Know-

Knowledge and Enjoyment are two Things, they may be parted, and may be unequal; and ſuch a Creature cannot be compleatly happy.

2*dly*, All Men who believe, that there is a God, muſt confeſs, that it is very fooliſh and very wicked to love our Selves in oppoſition to God. Is it poſſible for a Reaſonable Creature to be happy, who ſeparates himſelf from God? the World may much better ſubſiſt without the Sun; for God is the Life of a Reaſonable Soul, the brighteſt Object of our Minds, Eternal Truth and Wiſdom; there is nothing worth knowing without God; for to contemplate his Wiſdom and Goodneſs and Power in all Things, is that which gives a reliſh to all other Knowledge. *In him we live, move, and have our Being*; no Wiſe Man would be contented to live in a World which has not a God to govern it, nor to live any longer in it than he can truſt to, and depend on his Protection; and is it then the way to be happy to divide our Selves from God? can any Man chuſe better for himſelf, than God can? do we know our Selves

ſo well as he that made us; does not God know what Happineſs he hath made us for? or does he envy us the Happineſs for which he made us? Why then did he make us for ſuch a Happineſs? ſo impious is it to think, that God has forbid us any thing which is our true Happineſs. So vain is it to hope, to make our ſelves happy in contradiction to the Will and Laws of God. No Man thinks honourably of God, who does not believe, that his Laws are the moſt infallible Methods of our Happineſs, as well as the Tryal of our Subjection and Obedience; and he who does ſo, can never think of making himſelf happy by diſobeying God.

But ſuppoſing it were otherwiſe, is it not perfect Diſtraction to oppoſe our ſelves againſt God? Can we make our ſelves happy whether he will or no? Are we a fit Match for infinite Power? Can we reſiſt his Almighty Arm? How eaſily can he look us into Miſery and Confuſion? And does it not become us to ſubmit to him, and rather chuſe to obey his Will than to ſuffer his Vengeance? This is the Natural State of a Creature, to live in ſub-

ſubjection to his Maker and Sovereign Lord, to receive Laws from him, and to give up himſelf without any reſerve to his Government and Diſpoſal, and therefore this is the Natural Method of our Happineſs too.

3*dly*, As for the Third Notion of *Self-love*, to love our ſelves in oppoſition to the Love of Men, to divide our ſelves from the reſt of Mankind, and to carry on a Separate Intereſt, to which, as far as we are able, we make all other Intereſts give place. This is ſo hateful a Temper, that the very naming of it, is enough to expoſe it. No Man dares to undertake its Defence; thoſe who are moſt guilty of it dare not own it, but diſguiſe it with ſome more popular Appearances. A great and generous Mind that is concerned for all the World, that does all the good it can, that is ready to ſacrifice his private Eaſe, Satisfactions and Fortunes, nay Life it ſelf, to ſerve his Country, or to cleanſe the World of Monſters, is the Darling and Favorite of Mankind; he is loved, he is reverenced of all, as a common Friend of Humane Nature and Humane So-

cieties. But a Man who loves no body but himſelf, is a univerſal Enemy, and all Men ought to have a Care of him, and all Men will deſpiſe and abhor him, when they know him: Theſe *Self-lovers* themſelves, when they ſee their own Picture in another Face, will ſpit at it; for thoſe who love no body but themſelves, yet deſire that all Men ſhould love them, and be very tender of their Concernments, though they value no bodies Intereſt and Happineſs but their own.

But though this *Self-love* be univerſally condemned, yet it is too univerſally practiſed, and therefore I ſhall briefly ſhew, how impoſſible it is, that this *Self-love*, which divides us from the reſt of Mankind, ſhould make us happy. The Principles of Humane Nature, make the Exerciſe of it very uneaſy, and that can never be our Happineſs, which is a Force and Violence to Nature.

We feel a Natural Compaſſion for the ſufferings of Mankind, eſpecially of Innocent Men, who have not deſerved it; and as well as any Man loves himſelf; this makes it very painful to ſerve his own Intereſt by doing injury to others.

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One of the first Principles of Morality, which all Men confess to be highly reasonable, is to do to other Men, what we desire they should do to us, which is the Fundamental Maxim both of Justice and Charity, and in other Words, is to love all Men as our selves, and no Man can violate this Law, that is, no Man can love himself in opposition to the rest of Mankind, without falling under the Censures and Reproaches of his own Mind, which is no happy State.

One of the Divinest Pleasures of Humane Nature is to do good; this I take to be the great Advantage and Glory of Riches and Power, that it makes Men Publick Patrons, and Tutelar Angels to their fellow Creatures, which is the neerest Resemblance of the Perfection and Happiness of God, and in the Pagan World made Gods of Men: But *Self-love* knows nothing of this Happiness, but destroys not only the Sense, but the Notion of it.

But to set aside other Considerations, Mankind will not suffer a Man to make himself Easie and Happy by *Self-love*: When he is known, they combine against him, as a common Enemy, they load

him with Infamy and Reproach, they ſtrip him of his ill-gotten Riches, and ſeverely revenge his Injuries: this is the great End of Humane Government, and the proper uſe of the Rods and Axes of Princes, to reſtrain and govern *Self-love*, and to puniſh the outrages it commits.———

This is enough to ſatisfie us of the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs of this Principle, and how impoſſible it is, that *Self-love* ſhould make any Man happy. I will add but one Argument more to diſſwade you from it, that this *Self-love* can never enter into Heaven. That is a Holy Place, a Spiritual State, wherein nothing can enter that is Unclean; Fleſh and Blood, whether a fleſhly Carnal Mind, or an Earthly Body, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. There God is all in all, there is Univerſal Love among all thoſe bleſſed Inhabitants, and therefore there can be nothing of Self. O that bleſſed Place, where there is perfect Unity and Harmony of Souls, no Parties and Factions, no Emulations and Jealouſies, no Private Intereſts, no Rivals; where all center in God, and embrace each other, and mingle Flames,

and

and feel and rejoyce in each others Happineſs:

To which Bleſſed Place, God of his infinite Mercy bring us all through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever. Amen.

SER-

SERMON XVI.

Preached at the *Temple Church.*

2 Cor. iv. *ver.* 18.

While we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen: For the things which are ſeen, are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.

THIS is the Principle of that true greatneſs of Mind, which appeared in the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians, and enabled them to do that which the Pagan Philoſophy boaſted of without doing, *viz.* to contemn the World, and to live above its Hopes and Fears, to bear the Miſeries of Life, and to deſpiſe the Pleaſures of it, to ſuffer Shame and Reproach, and the loſs of all Things, and Death it ſelf, made

as

as terrible, as Pain could make it, not only without Fear, but with Joy and Triumph. For which Cauſe ſaith the Apoſtle, *we faint not, but though our outward man periſh, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen, are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.*

By the Things which are ſeen, is meant, all the Good and all the Evil things of this Life; by the things which are not ſeen, all the Happineſs and Miſeries of the Life to come. But is not this a very ſtrange Choice, to prefer what is abſent and unſeen, before what is preſent and ſenſible? To be unconcerned about the Happineſs or Miſeries of this Life, and to live upon unſeen Hopes and Fears? No ſaith the Apoſtle, We have all the reaſon in the world to do ſo, becauſe ſeen things are but temporal, and unſeen things are eternal: This World will laſt but a little while, the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away, but the World to come will have

no end; and this makes ſuch a difference between ſeen and unſeen Things, that there can be no reaſonable Competition, as there is no Compariſon between them. So that in ſpeaking to theſe Words, there are two things diſtinctly to be conſidered.

1. The Reaſonableneſs of this Principle of *looking to unſeen Things*, or of living by Faith, for it is Faith alone, that can give us a View of the inviſible World. And,

2. The Reaſonableneſs of this Choice, in preferring *unſeen* before ſeen Things, becauſe, *the things which are ſeen are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.*

1. The Reaſonableneſs of this Chriſtian Principle of Action, of looking at *unſeen things*, or living by Faith. Some unthinking Men are apt to make a Jeſt of believing; if you have any natural Reaſons, or ſenſible Demonſtrations, they will hearken to you, but Faith is below a man of Wit and Philoſophy; who knows how many Cheats and Impoſtors there have been in the World: But

But such men little consider, how necessary Faith is in Humane Life, that they themselves in a thousand Cases, have no other Principle to act upon in the greatest Concernments of this Life, and that upon much less evidence than we have for another World.

There are but three ways of knowing any thing, Sense, or Reason, or Faith, which last extends further, and has a more universal Influence upon the Government of our Lives, than either Sense or Reason. Our whole Conversation with Mankind is resolved into Believing, into a Civil, Historical, or Political Faith; all humane Commerce and Intercourse is founded on it, and there are very few Actions of our Lives, that can be performed without it; that he who will not believe must not live in this World. And is it not absurd and ridiculous then to laugh at believing? when they might as well laugh Sense and Reason out of the World, and live as well without them.

Now if we must live by Faith in this World, if we must believe, and must trust one another, if we must depend on Mens Word, or Oath, or Friendship, or Honesty, though we can have no natu-

natural Certainty or Demonſtration of Moral Cauſes, what reaſon can there be to baniſh Faith out of Religion, which is of ſuch abſolute neceſſity in all the other Concernments of Life? One would think there ſhould be leſs need of Faith for this World, than for the next, which is an inviſible State, and can be certainly known only by Revelation; and if Faith be ever reaſonable, it is moſt reaſonable where it is moſt neceſſary, where there is no other means of knowledge.

This is enough to ſhew you, how little thoſe Men underſtand themſelves, who ridicule Faith, which is to ridicule Humane Nature and all Humane Converſation. If we may, if we muſt believe, if we cannot live without believing, it muſt make a man contemptible to talk againſt all Faith, which is an Eſſential part of Humane Knowledge, and a neceſſary Principle of Moral Prudence.

Some Men are ſo afraid of being thought eaſy and credulous, that they run into the other Extream, and will believe nothing, at leaſt nothing concerning another World: And think Infidelity muſt needs be a Mark of Wit and Un-

Understanding, because it is directly opposite to Credulity, which is a Mark of Folly; and by the same Rule Covetousness must be a Virtue, because it is the opposite Extream to Prodigality. Credulity and Infidelity both argue the same weakness of Judgment; for it is as great want of Judgment, not to believe upon sufficient Evidence, as to believe without it; but Credulity is the most pardonable, because it is the better natured Fault, and argues the better Temper of Mind. A credulous Man believes too well of Mankind, and therefore is apt to trust them too soon; or he is very religiously inclined, and that disposes him to believe all religious Tales: But an Infidel distrusts all Mankind, and fears or hates all Religion, and therefore will believe nothing: That of all the Men in the World, I would least trust my self with an Infidel; for those who distrust all Mankind, and hate God, know some Reason why they should do it, and they must find it in themselves.

Now if Faith be a reasonable Principle of Action, if we may have such Moral Evidence of Things, which we cannot demonstrate, as a wise and cautious Man may and ought to rely on, and

and which no wise Man will contradict, or act against; why should not the same Evidence satisfie us, with reference to another World? If you would scorn a Man, who should reject *Cæsar*'s Commentaries, or any other approved Writings, against the Faith of all History; Why does it not deserve as much scorn to reject the History of the Gospel, which is the best attested History in the World? If it be reasonable to believe, is it not very unreasonable to demand any other Evidence than what belongs to Faith? To demand the Evidence of Sense, or Demonstration, for pure matters of Faith? When we have all the Evidence of Faith, all the Evidence, which a wise Man would ask for the Proof of any thing, which he did not and cannot see; to demand more, is to reject Faith it self, and to condemn all Mankind of Credulity, who believe any thing. And indeed, whoever considers what kind of Objections, Infidels urge against Christianity, will find, that they all tend either to downright Scepticism, or to reject all the Evidence of Faith, as unfit for a wise Man to act on, which overthrows all Humane as well as Divine Faith.

I know there are some, who think it reasonable to demand much greater Evidence for another World, than what may satisfie a wise Man in the Affairs and Concernments of this Life: And thanks be to God, we have greater Evidence and Certainty of Faith for another World, than we have for most of the Concernments of this Life, in which we must act by Faith, and Moral Evidence, as much greater, as a Divine Faith is more certain than Human Faith: But it is not reasonable to demand any other kind of Evidence for the next World, than the Evidence of Faith, because we can have no other Evidence for *unseen things*, and if we have the highest Evidence that Faith can give us, it is not reasonable to ask more.

But yet, why should not that Evidence satisfie us for another World, which in a thousand Cases satisfies us in this? What Excuse can we make for our Infidelity, if God give us such Evidence for another World, as wise Men think sufficient to act on in this? Their Reasons for this have so little appearance of Sense, that they may look like Abuses, and yet they are the best, and the only Reasons they can give.

1. That

1. That they are forced in many Caſes to act upon Faith and Hope, and truſt in this World, becauſe in many Things, they can have no better Evidence, and yet are under a neceſſity of acting, and chooſing one Thing or other, if they will live in the World: But they are under no neceſſity of believing any Religion, and therefore may demand ſuch Evidence, as will force an Aſſent, and leave no poſſibility of a Miſtake or Deceit. For why ſhould they believe any thing, which they are not abſolutely certain of, when they need not believe it unleſs they will.

Now both parts of this Anſwer are very faulty. Wiſe Men do not act upon Moral Evidence, and the Aſſurances of human Faith, meerly becauſe they can have no better, but becauſe they think this ſufficient, and to be a wiſe and reaſonable Principle of Action; and therefore they act with great ſecurity, where they have no other Evidence, and are under no neceſſity one way nor other, did they not think it wiſe and ſafe and prudent; which ſhews, what the Senſe of the wiſeſt part of Mankind is concerning the Evidence of Faith.

And yet it is much ſtranger, that a-

ny Man, who ever heard of another World, and of Heaven and Hell, can think it indifferent, whether he believe it or not. He must either believe, or disbelieve it, and the Consequence either way is of infinite Concernment. They have a mighty Mastery over themselves, if they can believe, and disbelieve what they will; there are such degrees of Evidence, even of Moral Evidence, as wise men can't resist, and I think, that makes Faith necessary, if we believe like Men. But when we read in the Gospel, he that believes shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned, this lays a terrible necessity upon us; for if the Gospel be true, and we continue Infidels, we must perish for ever: And if necessity will justifie our believing and acting upon reasonable Moral Evidence, though we have not the Evidence of Sense or Natural Demonstrations, those who do not think Eternal Happiness or Misery to be necessity enough, let them find a greater if they can.

2. Another Pretence is, that the vast difference between this World and the next, if there be another World, requires a very different degree of Evidence. The Things of this World are of such little

little Conſequence, that they may better venture, though they ſhould be deceived: But Religion is of Eternal Importance, and therefore it concerns them not to be too credulous in ſuch matters.

Now though there is a vaſt difference between this World and the next, I cannot bear, that Men who believe no other World, ſhould make this difference; for if this Life be all that they expect, no Man can ever venture more than all, whether it be Time or Eternity; and if they will venture their temporal All, upon the Evidence of Faith, why is it unreaſonable to venture our Eternal All upon it, when we can have, and indeed need no better Evidence. But this very Conſideration of the vaſt difference between Time and Eternity, turns upon themſelves, and makes it wiſe and reaſonable to act upon much leſs Evidence, than we have for the other World. For in Matters of ſuch vaſt importance, as every thing is that is Eternal, it concerns us always to be on the ſureſt ſide where we venture leaſt, if it ſhould happen that we are miſtaken. And let any Man conſider, which is the ſureſt ſide, to believe, or to disbelieve Chri-

stianity, and a future State; If Christianity be true, and there be an Eternal State of Rewards and Punishments in the next Life, if we disbelieve it, we are miserable for ever; but if we do believe it, and it should not prove true, we loose nothing by it but the transient Pleasures of Sin, and instead of them, have all the present Ease and Satisfaction of Vertue and great Hopes; and those who have tried both will tell you, that the Pleasures of Virtue far exceed the Pleasures of Sin, and that the Hope and Expectation of Immortal Life does more ravish and transport, than the Possession of this World can do.

The truth is, the Eternal Miseries of the next World are so very terrible, that no wise Man would run the least Hazard of them, but instead of demanding a demonstrative Certainty, that there is such a Place of Torment, would demand a demonstrative Certainty that there is not, before he would venture. And the Happiness of the other World so exceeds all our Imaginations, that a very little Evidence would perswade a wise Man to venture any thing, to be happy for ever.

The Sum of what I have said, in short

is

is this: To deſpiſe all Faith, is to ridicule Human Nature and Human Converſation; for God has made us ſuch Creatures, that three Parts of our Lives muſt be governed by Faith, and if Faith be a fooliſh, abſurd, unſafe Principle of Action, I'm ſure Man is a very wretched and contemptible Creature; for Man muſt live by Faith. We cannot ſee each others Hearts and Thoughts, and I believe no man deſires that other. Men ſhould ſee his Heart, how much ſoever he may deſire to ſee theirs; and then we cannot converſe with each other, with any Pleaſure and Security, without believing. We are finite Creatures, our Lives are ſhort, and we can be but in one Place at a time; and if we muſt believe nothing, but what we our ſelves ſee, what a narrow contemptible thing is human Knowledge; and therefore we muſt allow of the Teſtimony of Eye and Ear Witneſſes, and of credible Hiſtories, which is the Evidence of Faith, and furniſhes us with the beſt, as well as with the largeſt Part of our Knowledge, and with the wiſeſt Rules and Examples of Life. And though we may be, and often are miſtaken, this only makes Men more prudent and cautious, not Infidels;

But a Divine Faith gives us a much more infallible Assurance, than Human Faith can do; for we know, God cannot deceive us, as Men may, and then if we have as great, nay, much greater Evidence for a Divine Revelation, than we have for any other matters of Fact at such a distance; we have all the Evidence of the most certain Human Faith, and the infallible certainty of a Divine Faith.

Nay if they will but allow, which no considering Man can deny, that we have as good Evidence for the History of the Gospel, as they have for any other History, which they most firmly believe, it will be impossible for them to give a wise Reason, why they do not believe the Gospel. Nay were there less Evidence than there is, the vast Importance of it, which is no less than Eternal Life and Death, is reason enough to a wise Man to chuse the surest side, and to live by the Faith of another World.

2. Let us now consider the Reason and the Wisdom of this Choice. *We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

The difference between Temporal and Eternal

Eternal, is ſo demonſtrative a Reaſon, why we ſhould prefer Eternal unſeen things before temporal ſeen things; that it is hard to add any thing to give a new Strength to it, if Men do but underſtand what theſe Words, Time, and Eternity, ſignifie.

Suppoſe you ſhould ask any Man, whether he would chuſe to live threeſcore or fourſcore years, or to live for ever, he would certainly wonder at your Queſtion, and think it an Affront, ſince Nature teaches all Men to anſwer it without the leaſt diſpute, or conſideration about it. All Men love Life, and above all things deſire to live for ever; which is ſo ſtrong a Paſſion, that I doubt not at all; but the generality of Mankind, (ſuppoſing no other Life after this) would rather chuſe to be Immortal Beggars, than Mortal Princes; or at leaſt would content themſelves with a very mean Station in this World, and to take their Chance, as to the Sufferings of it, rather than not to be. For Life is ſweet, and it is a pleaſant thing to the Eye, to behold the Sun. And if Men, who know no better, would be contented to take their Fortune in this World, and to venture an Eternal Round

Round of uncertain and changeable Scenes, and prefer this before fourscore or a hundred Years of the greatest Prosperity and Glory; one would think, there should be no Comparison between the most prosperous State of this Life, and the eternal unchangeable Happiness of the next.

And yet we find by Experience, that though most Men are desirous to live as long as they can in this World, and would submit to any Conditions, which would make them Immortal here, they think the Case very much altered, when you promise them Immortal Life in the next World; as is very evident from this, that they will not submit to such a State of Discipline and Mortification to save their Souls, as they chearfully submit to, to save their Lives. Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath, will he give for his Life; but they will not part with all they have to save their Souls; nay, will venture their Souls to get or to save an Estate, or a very little part of it. And yet (which makes it more wonderful) there are great numbers of such Men, who profess to believe, that there is another World, and that they must be happy or miserable for ever. This is very

ry unaccountable, that all Men ſhould agree, that what is eternal ought to be preferred before what is temporal, and yet that the Generality of Mankind ſhould prefer temporal Things before the Things which are Eternal. What is to be ſaid to theſe Men? Will you prove, that Eternity is to be preferred before Time? This is loſt labour, for they all own it, and have a Natural Senſe of it, which is more powerful than any other Arguments. Will you then perſwade them to prefer Eternal before Temporal Things? but by what Arguments will you perſwade, if Eternity it ſelf cannot perſwade? In ſuch Caſes where there is no need of diſputing, no need to convince Mens Reaſons, I know nothing left, but to paint and repreſent, to draw ſuch lively Images and Pictures, as may move Mens Paſſions, and give them a feeling Senſe of the difference between Time and Eternity. And to do this to as great Advantage as I can, I ſhall 1*ſt.* conſider the difference between Time and Eternity. And, 2*d.* The difference between Things Temporal, and Things Eternal.

1*ſt.* The difference between Time and Eternity. You all ſee and feel what Time

Time is, it passeth away swiftly, and we pass away with it; when we look back, it is but like a Dream, or a Watch in the Night, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone. Some few Years clear the Stage of this World, and bring new busy Actors, or idle Spectators on it; and by that time we can well turn our selves round, we see all new Faces and new Scenes of things, and our selves hastening after, though we should happen to stay a little behind our Company. But who can represent Eternity? to live without end, a Duration, which it is not in the power of Numbers to measure, and therefore no Value can be put upon it.

To form such an Image of this in your Minds, as no Words can express, make Eternity present to you. Suppose this World to be at an End, as it will very suddenly be with us all, and that we were at this time in an Eternal State of Happiness or Misery; either with *Lazarus* in *Abraham*'s Bosom, or with *Dives* in Hell, tormented in endless Flames. Whatever the Happiness, or Misery of the next State is, is it possible for us now to conceive, what Passions will accompany this Thought, that whether we

we find our ſelves happy or miſerable, we ſhall be ſo for ever? What is the ſecure Triumph of a never fading Crown? What is the Terror, Confuſion, Amazement of a never dying Worm? Thus it will be with us, as ſoon as we remove out of this World; and if the Thoughts of Eternal Miſeries, when we think ſeriouſly of them, do now aſtoniſh us; if the Hope of Immortal Life does now tranſport good Men, and give them the Victory over this preſent World, what will it do, when they ſhall ſee and feel, what they now only fear or hope?

And is this ſo unreaſonable a thing, to ſuppoſe the other World preſent, which a very few Years, it may be a few Days, will make preſent to us? When we are ſo near the Grave, can not we look a little beyond it, and by an Eye of Faith contemplate the endleſs Happineſs of good Men, and the endleſs Miſeries of the Wicked: This is what the Apoſtle means by *looking at the things which are not ſeen*, to have our Eyes fixt upon the other World as if it were preſent; and there is very great reaſon for it, for though theſe Eternal Things are not yet preſent to us, yet Eternity is. Though we do not yet ſee that eternal

and

and unchangeable State of Happiness or Misery, yet we now know as well what Eternity signifies, as ever we shall do; and therefore we may contemplate the Nature of Eternity, and deeply affect our Minds with the Hope and Fear of it.

Though our Life in this World is short and perishing, yet our Souls are immortal, and therefore we are already Immortal Creatures, and an Immortal Creature from the first Moment of his Being is in Eternity, because he can never wholly die, or cease to be: So that Eternity, as it signifies an endless Duration, is as much present to us now, as ever it will be, though we are not yet in that unchangeable State, which shall last for ever. And does it not become an Eternal Being to think of Eternity, when, though we shall not always be, what we now are, yet we shall always be; and a Creature which shall always be, ought above all to look at those unseen Things which shall always be.

An Immortal Creature which must live for ever, is very little concerned in a changeable and vanishing State; for what do threescore or fourscore years signify, when we must live for ever? They

They bear no proportion to Eternity, and therefore can challenge but a very little Share and Intereſt in our Thoughts; An Immortal Creature muſt deſign nothing leſs than an Immortal Happineſs, becauſe nothing leſs is commenſurate to our Being; and for the ſame Reaſon that we deſire to be happy, we muſt deſire to be happy as long as we are.

No time can be too ſoon for ſuch Thoughts, becauſe an Immortal Creature ſhould never live a Day without them: Were we to ſpend Eternity in an endleſs round of Changes, we ſhould be no farther concerned, than to make every State of Life as eaſy and entertaining as we could: But when we know this World is the only changeable Scene, and that we muſt paſs from hence into an Eternal and Unchangeable State, and that we muſt be either happy or miſerable for ever, according as we behave our ſelves in this World; not to make Eternal Happineſs the commanding and governing Deſign of our Lives, or to run any Hazard of it, for the ſake of preſent things, is ſuch a Degeneracy of an Immortal Nature, that ſuch men very well deſerve, if not to forfeit Immortal Being,

yet

yet to forfeit Immortal Happiness.

But not to dissemble any difficulties, I will propose this Case as fairly as any one can desire. No Man is so perfectly bruitish, as absolutely to prefer Time before Eternity; every man had rather live for ever; but the difficulty is, when we may live threescore or fourscore Years in this World, (which though it be nothing to Eternity, yet is a very long State of Temptation) to deny our selves for so long a time, the present Pleasures and Satisfactions of Life, for the absent and unknown, though the endless Happiness of the next Life. The pretended Difficulties you see, are the present uneasy Restraints, which the Practice of Virtue lays upon our sensual Inclinations, and that we must deny our selves these present Satisfactions for the long Expectation of an absent and unknown Happiness.

Now I shall not at present dispute the Point between Vertue and Licentiousness, which of them contributes most to the present Ease and Pleasure of Life: But to make you sensible, how unreasonable an Objection this is, I will put you another Case. Suppose instead of the Promise of Heaven, God had promised

miſed Immortal Life in this World to the practice of Virtue; that this World ſhould have been a Paradiſe to all Virtuous Men, where they ſhould have lived for ever; and that wicked Men ſhould have lived a very little while, nay, ſuppoſe the longeſt Period of Human Life, in this World, and then have been cut off by ſome exemplary Puniſhment, and have periſhed in the Grave, what would you think reaſonable in this Caſe? to chuſe a Vertuous Immortality, or the ſhort and dying Pleaſures of Sin? You could not pretend in this Caſe, that the Rewards were abſent and unknown, for they would be preſent and ſenſible, they would be ſeen things, as all the Happineſs of this Life is: But the difficulties of Vertue (till we had brought our earthly Appetites and Paſſions under government) would be the ſame that they are now: And if you would think it reaſonable to be vertuous for an earthly Immortality, (as I perſwade my ſelf moſt Men would) I cannot imagine, that it ſhould weaken the Argument, to tranſlate this Immortal Life from Earth to Heaven, which is ſo much a happier Place than this Earth. And yet

I doubt not, but were this the Case, that Vertuous Men should be immortal in this World, and none but Sinners should die, Sin would render Men the most contemptible and infamous Creatures, to prefer the short Extravagancies of Vice before a Vertuous Immortality. In short, the difference between Time and Eternity is such a Reason as no difficulties can answer: Eternal Happiness is an abundant recompence for any temporal sufferings, and whatever the difficulties of Virtue and Religion may be, they must not be compared with Eternal Miseries.

2*dly*. As there is a vast difference between Time and Eternity, so there is as vast a difference between Things Temporal and Things Eternal. I do not intend at present to represent to you the Eternal Happiness or Miseries of the next Life, as I find them described in Scripture; nor either lessen the Happiness, or aggravate the Sufferings of this present Life; but shall keep close to my Argument, and only consider the difference, which Time and Eternity makes between things; and a very few Words will explain this: For it is evident, that whatever is subject to Time,

Time, is liable to Changes, Revolutions, Intermiſſions; but what is Eternal hath an unchangeable Nature, and is always the ſame. And what a vaſt difference does this make between the Happineſs and Miſeries of this periſhing Life, and the Eternal Happineſs, and Miſeries of the next?

The Happineſs of this Life can't be very valuable, becauſe it is not conſtant, the Enjoyments of it are frequently delayed, diſappointed, or interrupted; and the Miſeries of it are not ſo very formidable, becauſe they have their Allays and Intermiſſions too, and cannot continue long in great extremity: This is the Nature of temporal things to change and alter, which leſſens the Pleaſures, and tempers the Miſeries of Life: But an eternal, conſtant, uninterrupted Happineſs, an eternal, conſtant, uninterrupted Miſery, a Happineſs and Miſery without any end, and without any Intermiſſion or Allay; this is perfect Happineſs and perfect Miſery, infinitely more to be deſired, and feared, than what Time can alter. This repreſents Temporal Things as in themſelves of no great value, and gives a Natural Preference

to Eternal Things: Which is the reason of our Saviour's Exhortation; *Lay not up for your selves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for your selves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal.* This makes a natural Subordination between Temporal and Eternal Things, and justifies the Wisdom of our Choice in *making to our selves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations:* Or like that wise Merchant in the Gospel, who having *found a treasure hid in a field, went and sold all that he had, and bought that field.* This is sufficient to convince those Men, who believe another Life, of the reasonableness of this Choice, to govern our Lives by the Faith and Hope of unseen things, not to look at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen. Bad Men themselves feel the force of this Argument, and have no way to avoid it, but by making these unseen things more invisible than they really are: They love these seen things so well,

though

though they are but temporal, that they are not willing to believe there are any ſuch Unſeen Eternal Things, which they are convinc'd ought to have the Preference, if there be any ſuch Eternal Things: And therefore for a Concluſion, I ſhall briefly reaſon the Caſe with theſe Men, nor directly to prove the Certainty of another World; but to ſhew them, how unreaſonable and dangerous it is to entertain ſuch an Averſion, as they manifeſtly betray, to the Belief of it.

For can any thing be more infamous than an Averſion to the Belief of Immortality? Is any thing more natural to Mankind, than the Deſire of Immortality? Next to the Fears of being miſerable for ever, is there a more terrible Thought than falling into nothing? And how unnatural then is it for Men to be afraid of believing themſelves immortal, and to take great Pains to perſwade themſelves againſt all the Hopes and Inclinations of Nature, that they ſhall dye like Beaſts; and to appear never better pleaſed, than when they can ſtart ſome difficulties to weaken the Belief and Hope of another World.

True, you'l say, this seems somewhat unnatural, but this is partially represented and not the whole of the Case; the Gospel of Christ, which promises Eternal Life to all Penitents, threatens Eternal Death too against all impenitent Sinners; and if upon the Authority of the Gospel, we believe the Resurrection of the Just into Immortal Life, we must believe the Resurrection of the Wicked to Eternal Punishments; and these are such terrible things, that it is more desireable there should be no Heaven, then that there should be a Hell, and they had rather reject these great Hopes, than take the Hope and the Fear together.

This no doubt is the true Reason of Mens infidelity, not that they absolutely despise Immortal Life, the Desire of which is so natural and necessary; but that they fear Eternal Miseries: And yet in this case it is very unnatural to reject the Belief and Hope of Immortal Life: For the Desire of Immortality is the first and most necessary Desire of Nature, and therefore ought to govern all other Desires, for it is unnatural to prefer any thing before it. As fond as Men are of their Sins, yet

yet any Man of underſtanding would be aſhamed to own, that he had rather enjoy his Luſts thirty or forty Years, than be immortal. The Deſign of Infidelity is not only to cure Men's Fears, but to ſalve their Reputation, and to make their Vices leſs infamous. If there be no Life after this, *let us eat and drink for to morrow we die*, ſeems natural and reaſonable enough, but to eat and drink, and riot away Immortality, muſt make a Man infamous. Suppoſe God had promiſed Immortal Life to good Men, and threaten'd, not Eternal Puniſhments, but Annihilation to the Wicked. When Eternal Puniſhments were removed out of the way, would you have thought it reaſonable then to believe Immortality, and to live vertuouſly for the Hopes of Immortality? Would you have thought it infamous then to prefer Sin and Annihilation, before Vertue and Immortality; and is it not infamous then for the love of Sin, to reject the Hopes of Immortality, and to hope for Annihilation, as ſuch Men generally do; if we think it reaſonable to ſerve God, that we may be immortal, and that it would be infamous not to do ſo, ſuppoſing

the certain Knowledge of Immortal Life; then the Threatnings of Eternal Punishments can be no reasonable prejudice against the Belief of Immortality; for there is no reason to reject the Hopes of Immortal Life for fear of such Miseries, as we may escape if we please; that is, if we believe and chuse Immortal Life: No Man who does not prefer something else, or to speak plainly, who does not prefer the short Pleasures of Sin before Immortal Life, need fear Eternal Miseries; and therefore it is not the Fear of Eternal Miseries, which they know they may escape, but the Contempt of Eternal Life which makes them Infidels, and it concerns them to consider well, what the Consequences of this are.

For 1. as I have already observed, and there needs no great Proof of it, nothing can be more infamous, than to contradict the most noble and generous Desires of Human Nature: To be afraid to be immortal, is to desire to be a Beast, and to perish like a Beast; nay it is to desire what no Beast would desire; for Self-love and Self-preservation is implanted even in the brutal nature: And what a prodigious Degeneracy

racy is it of Human Nature, for Men to hate themſelves and their own Being, and to wiſh and hope that they may periſh in the Grave. It is a vain thing to ſet up for the Reputation of Wit and Philoſophy in this Cauſe, for Human Nature is againſt them, and therefore the generality of Mankind, who will always hope and deſire on Natures ſide, will be againſt them too; and Nature ſo abhors the Thoughts of Annihilation and Diſſolution, that all Men muſt deſpiſe thoſe as very contemptible Creatures, who can be contented to fall into nothing themſelves, and abhor them for their malicious Attempts to deprive other Men of the Hope of Immortality.

2. It is a ſtrong Preſumption againſt Infidelity, that it contradicts the Hopes and Deſires of Nature. Are there any other Natural Deſires and Appetites which have no Natural Objects to anſwer them? And why ſhould we think, that Nature ſhould implant in us a Deſire of Immortality, if we were not made to be immortal: This cannot be, if we were made by a wiſe Being; for then all the Deſires and Appetites of Nature muſt be wiſely made, that is

is, fitted to the nature of that Being to which they belong, and then Immortal Deſires can belong only to an Immortal Nature.

3. It alſo ought to be well conſidered, that this makes Infidelity the moſt inexcuſable Sin, for to reject not only all Supernatural Evidence, but all the Deſires and Inclinations of Nature, will admit of no Excuſe. This is an Apoſtacy from Human Nature, and though the Divine Goodneſs has a great tenderneſs for Human Infirmities, yet when Men wilfully put off Human Nature, they have no Right to the Excuſes, or to the Compaſſion which is due to Men. And ſuch Men ought to be very ſure, that they are in the right, who have no Excuſe to make, if they are in the wrong.

4. And yet it is impoſſible to be ſecure againſt the Inclinations, Deſires, and Sentiments of Nature. It is poſſible with great Art and Violence, for ſome time to ſtifle the Senſe of Nature, but Nature will take ſome Occaſion or other to get looſe, and to revive our Fears, when we have forfeited all our Hopes.

For 1. It is certain there can be demon-

demonſtration againſt Nature. If the Natural Deſires of Immortality do not prove that we are immortal, yet they are a Bar againſt all demonſtration that we are not: For that would be an ill-contrived Nature indeed, which ſhould have Natural Deſires and Appetites againſt demonſtration. That ſhould have a great Paſſion for Immortality, when it is demonſtrable that we are not immortal. And if they cannot demonſtrate, that we are not immortal, we ſhall certainly hope and fear on Natures ſide: And what will all the boaſting Pretences to Infidelity ſignify, if they cannot cure our Natural Hopes and Fears?

2. For Natural Fears and Hopes are very Mechanical Paſſions, and not under the Government of our Wills and arbitrary Opinions. They are no more to be ſilenced with Wit and Sophiſtry, than ſome Natural Antipathies are, which Men may think to reaſon away, but as ſoon as the Object of that Antipathy appears, all their Arguments are loſt, and they ſweat, and tremble, and flie; And thus do Infidels too, who pleaſe themſelves, that they can reaſon away another World into a Fairy

Fairy Land, but yet can't think seriously of it without trembling.

3. For whatever Baffle men put upon their Faith, yet these Hopes and Fears are so natural, that they can never perswade themselves, that what is reported of the other World, does not deserve to be hoped or feared. No Argument can convince any Man, that it is not desireable to live for ever, or that it is not the most terrible thing of all, to be miserable for ever, and then it is impossible not to hope or fear. The Desires of a less Happiness, or the Fears of a less Misery may be conquered; but when Men hear of Eternal Happiness and Eternal Misery, the one the most desireable, the other the most formidable thing to Human Nature, it makes it impossible to any thinking Man, neither to desire nor fear.

This shews, how vain it is to struggle against Nature; for Nature will be too strong for all our Pretences to Wit and Philosophy; and thus all Infidels find it is at one time or other.

5. I shall add but one thing more; since the Desire of Immortality is so natural, consider what an Eternal Torment this must be, if we lose Immortal Life

Life by our Infidelity. Natural Appetites laſt as long as Nature does, and when they are diſappointed, eſpecially if it be by our own fault, will torment us as long as they laſt. Now beſides all the poſitive Miſeries, which our Saviour threatens againſt Infidels, here is a Natural Cauſe and Demonſtration of their Miſery: The very Loſs of Eternal Life muſt eternally torment them, becauſe they muſt eternally deſire it; and theſe diſappointed Deſires will turn into Eternal Anguiſh, Deſpair, and Self-revenge.

Would but Men ſeriouſly conſider theſe things, *how unnatural the Inclinations to Infidelity are*, and how unnatural the Averſion to the Belief of Immortality is, and what terrible conſequences *they have*, it would make them willing and deſirous to believe, and then they would find no want of Evidence. There would not be ſo much need then of diſputing againſt Infidelity, but we might employ our time much better in exhorting and perſwading you to the conſcientious practice of our moſt holy Religion, that we may obtain the End of our Faith, even the ſalvation of our Souls.

Which God, &c.

SER

SERMON XVII.

Preached at the *Temple Church.*

Iſaiah 5. *ver.* 20, 21.

Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; that put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter.
Wo unto them that are wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own ſight.

IT gives great diſturbance to good Men, not only to obſerve the general corruption of Manners that is in the World, but the means whereby Mankind are now corrupted: That the very Notions of Moral Good and Evil are almoſt loſt among us, that Men call *evil good and good evil, darkneſs light, and light darkneſs; bitter ſweet and ſweet bitter*; and ſhew their good

good will to change the Natures as well as Names of things were that in their Power.

This may ſeem new and ſurprizing to Men unaquainted with the State of former Ages; but even upon this Account there is no new thing under the Sun. Men have been as wicked in former Ages as they are now, and have taken the ſame ways to juſtifie their wickedneſs, and to harden themſelves in Sin, that they do now. As great a Degeneracy as this is of Human Nature, the Prophet aſſures us in my Text, that there were ſuch Men in his days, who called *evil good and good evil*, and thus it is likely to be to the end of the World; and yet there will always be a Succeſſion of good Men, and the Eternal Differences of Good and Evil will never be loſt: But then good Men muſt endeavour by all wiſe Arts to preſerve a Senſe of Piety and Vertue, to vindicate Religion from the Attempts of Atheiſts and Infidels, and to put a ſtop to the growing evil: For this reaſon God by his Prophet denounceth a Woe againſt ſuch Men; which it ſhall be my Buſineſs at preſent to explain to you.

1*ſt.* I

1. I ſhall explain the ſeveral Terms in my Text, what it is to *call Evil Good, and Good Evil; to put Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs; to put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter*, and who thoſe are, *that are Wiſe in their own Eyes, and Prudent in their own Sight.*

2. I ſhall enquire, how Men come to judge thus perverſly of Things, which is intimated in the Order here obſerved: That they firſt call Evil Good, and then Good Evil; firſt put Darkneſs for Light, and then Light for Darkneſs; firſt Bitter for Sweet, and then Sweet for Bitter.

3*dly*, I ſhall conſider the Woe denounced againſt theſe Men, and how unavoidable it is.

1. To explain the Terms. And 1. What is meant by *calling Evil Good, and Good Evil.* For are there any Men in the World ſo ſenſeleſs or impudent as to affirm, That what Mankind call Sins are Vertues, or what they call Vertues are Sins? I never heard of ſuch Men; and

I believe there are no ſuch Men to be found: For there is no Fault which Atheiſts themſelves can find with thoſe which we call *Moral Vertues*; ſuch as Juſtice and Charity, Meekneſs, Humility, Patience, Temperance, Chaſtity, and the like, but that they do not agree with their Inclinations and Intereſts, and they deſire to be at liberty from ſuch Reſtraints, to live as they like beſt: they are not pleas'd, that the one ſhould be thought eſſentially Good, and the other Evil; or that the one ſhould be thought commanded, and the other forbidden by a Divine Law, which makes them accountable to a Superiour Lord and Judge for what they do. But if you will not call them Sins or Vertues, nor pretend a Divine Law for it, they will allow, what we call *Moral Vertues*, to be good Rules of Life, and very neceſſary for the prudent Government of Humane Societies, and ſuch as Mankind ought to agree in for their own Sakes, and for the Common Good; and that the contrary Vices are great and publick Miſchiefs, which ought to be reſtrained and puniſhed by Civil Laws: They are very well contented, and think it neceſſary that Men ſhould make them Laws,

Laws, but not God: For this ſtill leaves them at liberty to tranſgreſs theſe Laws, when they can do it ſafely, and when their Intereſt and Inclinations tempt them to it. This indeed is to reject the very Notion of Moral Good and Evil, but not in a ſtrict Senſe to call Evil Good, or Good Evil; for they allow of no ſuch Diſtinction between Good and Evil in a Moral Senſe. Tho' by the way I could never underſtand what they mean by this; for if the Matter of theſe Vertues or Vices be ſuch things as are naturally good or evil, then the doing ſuch things muſt be morally good or evil: For I know no other Notion of Moral Good and Evil, but doing or chuſing ſuch things as have a natural Good and Evil: If to rob our Neighbour of his Eſtate, to defame him, to abuſe his Wife or Daughter, be a great Injury to him, it is a great Wickedneſs in us: If to defend the Injur'd and Oppreſs'd, to relieve the Poor and Fatherleſs, and Widows, be a great Good to them, it is a great Vertue in us. And I know not what other Sanction Men would have for natural Laws, but the natural Good or Evil of things: and if there be an eſſential and eternal difference between natu-

ral Good and Evil, Nature has made an eſſential difference between doing Good and Evil, that is, between Vertue and Vice.

But to let this paſs; ſince theſe Men diſcard all the Moral Differences of Good and Evil, and yet own, that what we call Vertues do a great deal of good, and what we call Vices do great hurt and miſchief, the difficulty remains, in what Senſe any Man can be charged with *calling Evil Good, and Good Evil*, and I can think but of two Accounts of this Matter.

1. That they make their own Appetites, Intereſts, and Inclinations the only Rule and Meaſure of Good and Evil; as they muſt neceſſarily do, when they allow of no common Rule and Standard for all Mankind: For if, as theſe Men perſwade themſelves, there be no Law either of God or Nature to diſtinguiſh between Good and Evil, there can be no other diſtinction but what every Man's own Appetite and Inclination makes for him; that is his Good, which he beſt likes, and that is Evil, which he does not like. Good and Evil ſignifie nothing more, but what pleaſes or diſpleaſes

ſes him; and therefore when he feels himſelf highly pleaſed and gratified with what the reſt of Mankind think a great Evil, and really is ſo, he laughs at their Ignorance and Folly, and calls and chuſes it as his Good; and when that which is really Good croſſes his Intereſts and Inclinations, he rejects it as a great Evil. When ſuch Men think it their Intereſt to be Unjuſt, or their Inclinations tempt them to be Unchaſte, they don't think ſuch Actions Vertues, for they diſown that Name; but they think them good, that is, profitable and pleaſing; nor do they think Juſtice, Temperance, and Chaſtity to be Vices, but great Evils, as contrary to their Gain or Pleaſure, which is to call that which is morally Good, Evil, and that which is morally Evil, Good.

2*dly*, Beſides this, the better to excuſe themſelves from the Shame and Reproach of ſuch Actions (which will be always infamous, when they have done and ſaid all they can) though they dare not call Vice Vertue, nor Vertue Vice, yet they give good Names, which are the Appendages and Properties of ſome Vertues to their Vices, and bad Names to Vertue. This is ſo common, and

ſo well known, that I need not inſiſt on it.

An eaſie, obliging, friendly Converſation is very charming, when it is governed by ſtrict Vertue: theſe Men let the Vertue alone, and juſtifie their Vices as only the Effects and Inſtances of good Humour and Sociableneſs, and of a complying Temper, to make their Company eaſie, and their Converſation pleaſant and entertaining; and this they think a good Apology for all their Lewdneſs, Debaucheries, and Profaneneſs; which may make them agreeable Company for one another; but very unfit for the Converſation, not only of good Men, but of prudent and cautious Sinners; but that is all one, they will have this good Humour, and that is a good Name, which will ſuit any Vice which pleaſes themſelves and their Company. Thus to be diligent in our Buſineſs, prudent and frugal in our Expences, to mortifie our ſenſual Appetites, and deny the Cravings of Luſt, and uſe our Bodies hardly, are very commendable things, when they are oppoſed to Idleneſs and Luxury, and have regard to the Care of our Families, and to make us capable of all Acts of Charity, and

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to ſubdue the Fleſh to the Spirit, and to make us more devout Worſhippers of God: And therefore a meer Earth-worm, who does all this for no other end but to get or to ſave his Money, tho' he ſtarve himſelf, and his Family, and the Poor by it, and makes himſelf a vile Slave all his Days, calls this ſordid Covetouſneſs by theſe good Names, of Diligence, Prudence, Frugality, Temperance, Mortification, when in Truth it is nothing but a love of Money above his Eaſe and Pleaſure, and adoring it as his God.

Thus on the other hand, Superſtition and Hypocriſie are very ill Names; and theſe at all Adventures they beſtow upon Piety and Vertue, to excuſe their own Neglect and Contempt of both; as if no Man could be ſincere, becauſe there are ſome Hypocrites, or as if there were no ſuch thing as Religion, becauſe ſome Men would appear to be religious, who are not, though it is a better Argument for Religion, that even bad Men deſire to be thought religious.

Thus an affected Singularity is very offenſive and nauſeous to all wiſe Men; and this is their Name for a ſullen, inflexi-

ble Vertue, which will not do a bad thing to pleaſe its Company, nor admit bad Men into the Privacies and Familiarities of Converſation; as if there were no Medium between affecting Singularity, and being wicked for Company.

This is the Art of changing Names: call any Vertue or Vice by its own Name, ſuch as Piety, Juſtice, Charity, Temperance, Chaſtity; or Profaneneſs, Injuſtice, Drunkenneſs, Adultery; and they have nothing to ſay againſt the one, nor for the other; for theſe are Names of Honour and Eſteem, or of Infamy and Reproach all the World over: But if they can find any thing in Vice, which bears the leaſt reſemblance to what ſome Vertues oblige us to, they preſently give the Names of thoſe Vertues to their Vices; and if a vertuous Man may do any thing for wiſe and good Reaſons, which has any Likeneſs or Analogy to what bad Men do for very bad Reaſons, they give the Names of thoſe Vices to Vertue, which is in a ſtrict and proper Senſe, to call *Evil Good, and Good Evil*: And this there are too many guilty of, who are not profeſs'd Atheiſts or Infidels; who think it

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ſome Excuſe for their Vices, if they can find any thing good to ſay of them, and an Apology for their Lukewarmneſs and Indifferency in Religion, if they can charge ſome zealous Profeſſors with Phariſaiſm and Hypocriſy; but by whomſoever, and for what reaſon ſoever this be done, the Woe belongs to all thoſe who *call evil good, and good evil.*

2*dly.* What is meant by *putting darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs.* Darkneſs and Light very often in Scripture ſignifie Vice and Vertue: Sin is the work of Darkneſs, to walk in the Light is to live holily, as St. *John* tells us, 1 *John* 1. *ver.* 6, 7. *if we ſay we have fellowſhip with him,* (God) *and walk in darkneſs,* live in any Sin, *we lie and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,* if we are holy as God is holy, *then have we Fellowſhip one with another;* and thus it is the ſame with calling Evil Good and Good Evil.

But then *Darkneſs* ſignifies alſo Ignorance and Error, falſe and corrupt Notions of God and Religion; and *Light* a clear and certain Knowledge, eſpecially in matters of Religion, what concerns

cerns the Will of God, and the way to Heaven, as our Saviour tells us, *light is come into the world, but men love darkneſs rather than light*, John 3.19. And thus we muſt underſtand it here: Thoſe Men who call Evil Good and Good Evil, who reject the moral differences of Good and Evil, and confound the Names of Vertue and Vice, pervert all the Principles of Knowledge, and Rules of judging between Good and Evil; they *put darkneſs for light*, call all the arbitrary and ridiculous Principles of Atheiſm and Infidelity *Light*, and eſteem them as the moſt true and certain Knowledge, though indeed they teach us nothing, but reduce us to the moſt perfect ſtate of Ignorance, by unteaching all that Mankind knew before; for if there be no God, and no difference between Good and Evil, there is an End of all Knowledge, which is the Light of the Mind; for the next ſtep is to *put light for darkneſs*, to reject all the Natural, and all the Supernatural Means of Knowledge, the Natural Notions of our Minds, the Natural Light of Reaſon, and the Supernatural Light of Revelation, as meer Ignorance and Impoſture, the Cheats of Education or of a timo-

timorous Fancy, or the Cunning of Stateſmen, or the Inventions of Prieſts: Such Men you know there are in the World, and this Woe belongs to them.

3*dly*. *To put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter* is a corruption, not meerly of our Judgment, but of our Natural Senſation, of our Natural Taſte and Reliſh of Things: *Bitter* ſignifies whatever is naturally uneaſy, grievous, offenſive, as bitter things are to the Palate; that which cauſes Trouble, Anguiſh, Remorſe, as all wicked Actions naturally do; now ſuch things as are grievous and afflicting to all the reſt of Mankind, who have any natural Senſe left, theſe Men call *ſweet*, account their Pleaſure and Happineſs: But then what is naturally ſweet, hath a Natural Eaſineſs, Pleaſure, Satisfaction, as all good and vertuous Actions have; this they call *bitter*, theſe are the grievances of their Life, an intollerable Yoke, which they cannot and will not bear. This is the moſt degenerate State of Human Nature, which hath loſt all Reliſh of Vertue, and all Senſe of Shame and Fear and Remorſe when they do Evil; their Minds are perfectly dead and ſtupid, with-

without any Rational or Spiritual Senſations; they have nothing but their bodily Senſes left, and by theſe alone they judge of Sweet and Bitter; what gratifies their bodily Senſes, that is their Pleaſure and Happineſs, without any regard to Vertue, Modeſty, or Honour; what lays Reſtraints upon their ſenſual Inclinations, that is bitter, uneaſy, and grievous; and no wonder that there is a Woe denounced againſt theſe Men.

4*ly. Woe be to them that are wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own ſight.* Where the Prophet ſpeaks of the ſame Men ſtill; *thoſe who call evil good and good evil, who put darkneſs for light and light for darkneſs, who put bitter for ſweet and ſweet for bitter*; and yet think themſelves the only wiſe Men in the World, though they contradict the Senſe of all Mankind, the natural uncorrupted Senſe of their own Minds, the Light of Nature and the Word of God. This is the juſt Character of Atheiſts and Infidels, who think themſelves the only Wits, the only Philoſophers, and laugh at all the reſt of the World as eaſy, credulous, unthinking Fools, who are under the Tyranny of Cu-

Cuſtom and popular Opinions, which expoſes them to all other Cheats. They think it an Argument of Wit and profound Thought to contradict all Mankind; for there are but few wiſe Men they ſay in the World, and the moſt are uſually in the wrong, which may be allowed as to improved Knowledge, which is gained by laborious ſtudy and obſervation; but the Folly lies on the other ſide, when Men advance Paradoxes, which contradict the univerſal Senſe of Nature; for in ſuch Caſes the moſt are likely to be in the right, becauſe Natural Productions are more common than Monſters; that a wiſe Man will rather think and judge with the Multitude, when they think on Natures ſide, than with the moſt famed Philoſophers againſt Nature: But thoſe who affect to contradict the reſt of the World, muſt think themſelves the only wiſe Men, if they think at all; that we have no more reaſon to wonder at their Pride and Inſolence than at their Atheiſm and Infidelity.

2*dly*. Let us now inquire how theſe Men come to ſink into ſo degenerate a State, as one would think impoſſible

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to a reaſonable Nature; and that is intimated in that order which is obſerved in my Text; that they firſt call Evil Good, and then Good Evil; firſt put Darkneſs for Light, and then Light for Darkneſs, *&c.* As to conſider this particularly.

1ſt. They begin with calling Evil Good, for no Man can begin with calling Good Evil: Nature will have the firſt word, and paſs the firſt Judgment on Things; and Nature as corrupt as it is, till it be depraved and vitiated by evil Cuſtoms, will call Good good, and Evil evil. Atheiſts and Infidels muſt confeſs, that as wiſe as they think themſelves now, there was a time when they were as very fools as the reſt of the World, that is, when they had the ſame Opinions about Good and Evil, which the reſt of Mankind ſtill have; when they did own a moral difference between Good and Evil, and called Good and Evil by their right Names; and it is as certain, that the only Reaſon for altering their Opinions and changing the Names of Good and Evil, was changing their Manners; that they grew very fond of what they themſelves as well as the fooliſh Multitude thought

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and called Evil, and then they began to think and to call it Good, and the necessary Consequence of this is to call Good Evil; and as unwilling as they are to own this, it is demonstrable there can be no other Reason for it.

Though these Men could prove (which they will never be able to do) that there is no moral, essential, immutable difference between Good and Evil, between Vertue and Vice, yet this is no reason to call Evil Good, or Good Evil; for though they were neither Sins nor Vertues, neither forbid nor commanded by a Divine Law, yet they themselves confess, as I observed before, that what we call Vertues have so much Good in them, that they are the best and wisest Rules of Society and Conversation, necessary to secure every Mans private Interest, and the Peace and good Government of the World, and therefore fit to be encouraged, and to be made Laws in all civiliz'd Nations; and that what we call Sins have so much Evil in them, that they are very destructive to Human Societies, and deserve to be restrained and punished; and then it is certain there never can be any reason to call Evil Good

Good, and Good Evil, which by their own Confeſſion is a direct contradiction to the Nature of Things; it is to call that Evil, which they themſelves own to be a great and publick Good, and that Good which they own to be a publick Miſchief, which there never can be any reaſon for: So that the Caſe is plain, it is not Reaſon but Luſt which calls Evil Good and Good Evil; till Luſt prevails above Reaſon, Vertue and Vice, Good and Evil, keep thoſe Names which God and Nature has given them, and ſuch Men offer as much Force and Violence to their Natural Underſtanding, when they call Evil Good and Good Evil, as they do to Natural Conſcience, when they chuſe the Evil, and refuſe the Good. This is Anſwer enough to ſuch Men, who would reaſon or laugh away the diſtinction between Good and Evil, and ought to be a Warning to us all, how we engage in a Courſe of Wickedneſs; for how much ſoever we deſpiſe and abhor theſe wicked Principles, we ſhall ſoon think as theſe Men do, if we grow as wicked as they are.

2*dly*, Theſe Men firſt *put Darkneſs for Light, and then Light for Darkneſs.* Men

Men are not born ſtark blind, but have the Light of Reaſon to diſcern the natural differences of Things, and to direct their Lives; and as weak and defective as meer natural Reaſon is, eſpecially in Matters of Religion and another World, it directs us to a ſafer Guide: For Reaſon it ſelf teaches us to believe God, who cannot deceive us, and can it ſelf judge of the external and viſible Marks of a Revelation; that is, can judge, when God ſpeaks, and what we muſt receive, as taught by God. This is the Light of Mankind, the Light of Reaſon or Revelation, what Nature teaches, or what God reveals: And all Mankind at firſt both ſee and own this Light; for no Man is born an Atheiſt or an Infidel: But bad Men, who have corrupted their Manners, and cannot juſtifie their Vices, nor quiet their Conſciences, if they attend either to the Light of Nature or Revelation, muſt ſeek for other Remedies; and this makes them eſpouſe the Principles of Atheiſm and Infidelity; and theſe they call Light, which in Truth is a meer *Ægyptian* Darkneſs; and then they muſt call Light Darkneſs, reject and ſcorn both the natural

Dictates of Reason, and the supernatural Revelation of the Divine Will, as Ignorance and Darkness.

Now, whatever Opinion Men have of their Philosophy, yet how they should learn what neither Nature nor God teaches them, or how they should discover, that what all the rest of the World believe, that God and Nature has taught them, is false, is a Mystery to me: And the only Account that can be given of it, is what our Saviour gives, *That light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil*: And when they love Darkness, it is no wonder that they call it Light; but they must first call Darkness Light, before they can put out the Light, and turn it into Darkness.

Now if this be the Truth of the Case, as our own Experience, and our Observations of other Men assure us it is, this is a sufficient Reason to reject all the Principles of Atheism and Infidelity without disputing; for they were not born and bred with us, as what is natural is, and therefore must be owing to the Lusts and Vices of Men, which are the Works of Darkness, and hate the Light;

Light; and nothing seems stranger to me, than that of all the Men in the World, these Men should pretend to Reason, who have the least Right or Pretence to it: For what Principles can they reason on, who reject the Light of Nature and of Revelation? What is Natural Reason, but the Reason of Humane Nature? And how shall we know what this is, but by those common Principles of Reason, which Nature has implanted in all Mankind, and which Art, and Wit, and Vice it self, have much ado to silence, and can never perfectly root out? and certainly that is not Natural Reason, which contradicts all the Principles of Humane Nature; and what is that Reason, which is not the Reason of Humane Nature? Or how is Mankind concerned in such Reasons as can be no Rule to them, unless they put off Humane Nature? And indeed this is the Case of these very Men; they have put off Humane Nature, are degenerated into Bruits; and have the Reason and Understanding of Bruits, espouse such Principles as serve no other End, but to justifie the brutal Nature; and therefore laugh at the common Sentiments and Faith of Mankind,

kind, and pretend to Reaſon, only to reaſon Humane Nature, as well as Revelation, out of the World. How ſubtilly ſoever theſe Men may diſpute, it ſufficeth me, that this is not the Original Belief of Mankind, and therefore is not owing to God or Nature, but to Luſt. No Man can call Light Darkneſs, till he is in love with Darkneſs for the ſake of the Works of Darkneſs.

3*dly*. The ſame may be ſaid of *putting Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.* Men muſt firſt reconcile themſelves to Wickedneſs, which is naturally very bitter, uneaſie, and grievous, and ſhake off all ſenſe of Shame, and Modeſty, and Fear, before they can in good earneſt reproach Vertue: For till Men are very wicked, Vertue is the great Pleaſure, the trueſt and ſweeteſt Pleaſure of Humane Nature.

Thirdly. Let us now conſider the Woe that is denounced againſt theſe Men, and how unavoidable it is: *Woe be to them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil*, &c. What this Woe is, is not here expreſs'd; but an indefinite Woe is very terrible, for it includes all the Woes that God has any where in Scripture

ture threatned against Sinners, the Vengeance of God in this World, and the eternal Miseries of the next. A Woe signifies a State of extream Misery, wherein Men shall bewail and lament themselves, without Hope or Redress; all the Miseries that such Sinners deserve, and therefore the greatest that Humane Nature can suffer; because this is the greatest Degeneracy of Humane Nature. And therefore to warn you all of falling into this State, I shall briefly shew you how unavoidable this Woe is.

When Men are so in love with their Sins, that they resolve never to part with them, they vainly think, that the only way to secure themselves, is to banish God out of the World, and to destroy all the differences of Good and Evil, and then they may please themselves, and live as they list, without Fear or Shame, or any Danger of a future Account.

Now so far they are in the right, that if they could banish God out of the World, their Work were done, and they might bid defiance to all the Pulpit-thunder, and laugh at all the superstitious fears of Sinners. But to perswade themselves

contrary to the Senſe of Nature, and the univerſal Belief of Mankind that there is no God, will not baniſh God out of the World: And if they ſhould find a God, after they have perſwaded themſelves there is none, as they certainly will, they will find this God a provoked and terrible Judge: For what greater Contempt and Deſpite can be offered to God, than to perſwade themſelves that there is no God? This is a State of open Enmity: They hate God, and would deſtroy his Being, if they could; for the Reaſon why they perſwade themſelves there is no God, is becauſe they would have none; and thoſe who hate God, are hated by him, and muſt ſuffer his eternal Vengeance.

Thus, if there were no eſſential difference between Good and Evil, they might chuſe for themſelves, and call things by what Names they pleaſed, *Evil Good, and Good Evil*; but if there be ſuch a difference, however they have made ſhift to conquer this Senſe at preſent, if they refuſe the Good, and chuſe the Evil, they muſt loſe all that Happineſs, which they might expect from what is a natural Good; that is, all the true

true Happiness of Humane Nature, and suffer all those Miseries which those Evils, which are contrary to the Happiness of Humane Nature, and destructive of it, will expose them too. For Good and Evil are not empty Names; but Good signifies the Happiness of that Nature, whose Good it is, and Evil its Misery: And if after all their Philosophy, there be such a distinction of Good and Evil with respect to Humane Nature (and that is a strange Nature which has no Good or Evil belonging to it;) to reject the Good must deprive them of Happiness, and to chuse the Evil must make them miserable. And if there be a moral as well as natural difference between Good and Evil, that one deserves to be rewarded, and the other punished, we must expect, that the Righteous Judge of the World will reward and punish us according to our Works.

If Men shut their Eyes, or put out the Light, and then call Darkness Light, and Light Darkness, how secure soever this may make them at present, all that they gain by it, is to go to Hell blindfold, not to see their Danger, be-

fore they feel themſelves irrecoverably miſerable. If there be a diſtinction between Light and Darkneſs, in the Moral and Spiritual, as well as in the Natural World, as there muſt be, if there be any difference between true Knowledge and Wiſdom, and Ignorance and Folly; If the Office of Light be to direct us in the way to Heaven, thoſe bleſſed Regions of eternal Light, which thoſe who wander in Darkneſs can never find: If the neceſſary Effect of putting Darkneſs for Light, be to loſe the ſight of the other World, both of Heaven and Hell, and the way that leads to each; if there be ſtill a Heaven and a Hell, as they will certainly find there is, it will be impoſſible for them either to get to Heaven, or to miſs Hell; they will loſe their way in the dark to Heaven, but Darkneſs leads directly to Hell, whither no Man will venture to go but in the dark. Men, who have their Eyes open, and ſee Hell before them, are apt to ſtart, and give back at ſuch a Sight; but thoſe who can ſhut their Eyes, and put out the Light, and neither ſee a God nor a Judge, Heaven nor Hell, will ſin on, without fear of Hell, till they feel its Torments.

There

There is no ſuch infallible way to make our ſelves wicked and miſerable as to ſhut out the Light, which would diſcover to us both our Shame and Danger. And let no Man envy thoſe, who have ſo blinded their Minds, that they can ſin without Shame and Fear, who does not think it a great Happineſs to be eternally damned before they know it.

But there is this further Danger in putting Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs, that it ordinarily ſeals Men up to the Day of Deſtruction. Men, who thus wilfully and obſtinately ſhut their Eyes, ſeldom open them again in this World; and it is too late for them to open them in the next. Such Men do not deſerve, that God ſhould uſe any extraordinary Methods to convince them, and they have already hardened themſelves againſt all the ordinary Means of Grace; eſpecially when they are arriv'd at that degree of aſſurance, to be *wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own ſight*; to think all Mankind eaſie, ignorant, credulous Fools, but themſelves. There is no way left of dealing with ſuch Men, as with reaſonable Creatures; neither Argument nor Autho-

Authority can prevail, while they believe themſelves the only Maſters and Judges of Reaſon, and have judged all before-hand, and have nothing to do, but to keep their Ground, and to reject every thing that is offered for their Conviction with Scorn. This ſhews how dangerous a State theſe Men are in, and how little hope there is, if they be in the wrong, that they ſhould ever ſee their Miſtake, and deliver themſelves out of the Snare: And certainly we ought to look well about us, before we ſhut our Eyes, when there is ſo little hope that we ſhall ever open them again.

Thus when Men put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter, what is Bitter will prove Bitterneſs in the latter end. If a Senſe of Guilt and Sin be ſo grievous and tormenting, as all Men feel it is, before they have ſtupified their Conſciences, and corrupted their natural Senſe of things; when this unnatural Force is taken off, when theſe Opiates have loſt their Virtue, and Conſcience awakes again, as it will certainly do in the next World, it will awake in a terrible fright and fury; never to fall aſleep more. When Sinners are convinced

ced of their Wickedness, and of the Displeasure of God, and of the Danger Sin has brought them into, Repentance it self has its Agonies and Terrors, its Remorse, and Shame, and Fear, but not without Hope: And Repentance as it reforms our Lives, cures our Fears, and heals the Wounds which it made. But when Mens Eyes shall be opened in the next World, to see their Sin and their Misery; when Repentance comes too late to procure a Pardon; when they shall repent with eternal Anguish, Horror, Despair, and Self-Revenge, then they will find, what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God, which breeds a Worm in the Conscience, which perpetually knaws and torments, but never dies.

To conclude. Let this warn us all how we engage in a Course of Sin, which is so apt to pervert our Judgments, to blind our Minds, and to corrupt our natural Sense of things. Or if we should at any time be conquered by the Temptations of the World and the Flesh, let us rather chuse the Shame and the Sorrows of Repentance, than take Sanctuary in Atheism and Infidelity, which

which may skin over the Wound at preſent, but cannot heal it; which may give us ſome preſent Eaſe and Relief, but will end in eternal Woe. Let us always preſerve a great Senſe of God, and of the differences of Good and Evil, and hearken to the Dictates and Reproofs of Natural Conſcience and of the VVord of God, that we may never fall under the VVoe denounced in my Text againſt thoſe *who call Evil Good, and Good Evil; who put Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs; who put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter; who are wiſe in their own Eyes, and prudent in their own Sight.*

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, be Honour, Glory and Power, now, and for ever. Amen.

SER-

SERMON XIX.

Preached at the *Temple*-Church.

Iſaiah 5. *ver.* 20, 21.

Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; that put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter.
Wo unto them that are wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own Sight.

I Have already explained theſe Words, and ſhewn, 1. What is meant by *calling evil good, and good evil*; by *putting darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs*; by *putting bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter*; and who thoſe are *who are wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own ſight.*

2. How Men come to judge thus perverſely of things.

3. The

3. The Woe denounced againſt ſuch Men, and how unavoidable it is.

But there is one which I muſt obſerve from the whole, which may be of great uſe to us, *viz. The natural Progreſs of wickedneſs, and what art and pains it requires to make a finiſht and accompliſht Sinner.*

In this corrupt State of Nature our ſenſual Inclinations are very ſtrong, and the firſt thing we learn, is to pleaſe our Senſes; and this is apt to corrupt our Lives with all worldly and fleſhly Luſts; but ſtill while Men are conſcious to themſelves in any Inſtances, that what they do is Evil, and deſerves to be puniſhed both by God and Men, they are but very imperfect Beginners; they ſin with Shame, and Fear, and Remorſe; and it is to be hoped at one time or other, the terrible Rebukes of their own Conſciences, and the Fears of future Vengeance may reclaim them; if this does not put a ſtop to them, but they proceed in an habitual courſe of Wickedneſs, and are reſolved not to part with their Sins, it is time for them to conſider how to get rid of thoſe tormenting Paſſions of Shame and Fear.

I. And

I. And the first Step to this, is to destroy the Essential Differences of Good and Evil, to call Evil good, and Good evil; but how hard is it to do this? For, besides the difficulty of rooting up those natural Notions of Good and Evil, which are so deeply imprinted on our Minds; which, if it be allowed possible, as I believe it is not, must yet be acknowledged to be very difficult, as difficult as it must be to change or unmake our Natures: I say, besides this, what good did Sin ever do them, that they should call it good? Or, what hurt did Vertue ever do them, that they should call it evil? If they would but tell us what they mean by Good and Evil, we might come to some Resolution in this matter: Nay, if they would but allow that the same thing cannot be both good and evil in its own nature, we might soon decide this Controversie. There is not any one Vice, how fond soever they may be of it themselves, but what they will condemn in other Men as a great Evil, especially when they themselves suffer by it; nor any one Vertue, how averse soever they are to practise it, but what they must com-

commend in other Men as that which does a great deal of good, eſpecially when they themſelves receive good by it. Now can any Man poſſibly perſwade himſelf that that is evil, which at the ſame time he confeſſes does a great deal of good: Or, that to be good, which he confeſſes does great evil and miſchief? Mens Luſts and Vices may perſwade them to refuſe the Good, and to chuſe the Evil, and to think it very good for them to do ſo; but it is impoſſible for them, how much ſoever they gratifie themſelves by it, to think thoſe good Actions which do great Evil and Miſchief; or thoſe evil Actions, which do great Good to the World: to think in good earneſt that they do good when they ſee and know that they do hurt and Miſchief; or that they do Evil, when they do Good: And as long as this Diſtinction between good and evil Actions laſts, it is impoſſible for them to get rid of the Notions of Good and Evil.

But this they own, and are not much concerned about it, that in pleaſing themſelves in the Gratification of their Luſts, which they call Good, they very often grieve and injure other Men;

to

to deny their own Profit, Pleaſures and Satisfactions; nor to grieve and afflict themſelves in the exerciſe of very expenſive aud laborious Vertues for other Mens Eaſe and Pleaſure. All that they mean, when they reject the Moral Differences of Good and Evil is, that what we call Vertues, do not in their own nature deſerve Praiſe and Reward, nor Vice Shame and Puniſhment; and therefore they are at liberty to chuſe what they pleaſe; and their only natural Rule is to pleaſe themſelves.

I ſhall not diſpute this Matter with them now, which one would think thoſe who live in human Societies, ſhould be afraid, as well as aſhamed to own, leſt Mankind ſhould think it as much their Intereſt to get rid of them, as they do to deſtroy all Beaſts of Prey; but it ſeems impoſſible to me, that Men can really believe this, whatever they ſay.

That Praiſe and Shame are in their own natures inſeparable from Vertue and Vice, is not only the Belief of all Men, but what all Men feel. Good Men find the Rewards of Vertue in the Applauſe of their own Conſciences; and the firſt Revenge that Sin takes upon bad Men, is in the Laſhes and Reproaches

of their own Minds. *Prima eſt hæc ultio quod ſe Judice, nemo nocens abſolvitur.* And that this is the univerſal ſenſe of Mankind, I think needs no other Proof, but that it is the univerſal Language of Mankind. For in all Languages under Heaven the Names of Vertue and Vice are Names of Honour and Reproach. Natural Perfections or Defects, ſuch as Strength and Beauty, ſound Reaſon and Vivacity of Wit, or Weakneſs, Deformity, Ignorance, Folly, or Dulneſs; or the external Circumſtances of Fortune, as Riches or Poverty, Nobibility of Birth, or a mean Parentage, a mean or liberal Education, may be brought into Mens Characters; but you can never praiſe or reproach to any purpoſe, but upon account of Vertue or Vice: and ſhould any Man venture to commend another for being unjuſt, unchaſte, or intemperate, or to reproach him for the contrary Vertues, he would make himſelf ridiculous; for Mankind are unacquainted with ſuch new Terms of Honour and Reproach, which in their Language ſignifie quite contrary: Nay, theſe very Men, who tell you that there is no natural Shame due to Vice, whenever they quarrel and intend to reproach each other in good earneſt (which often hap-

happens) they always make one Vice or other the Matter of their Reproach, which proves whatever they ſay, that they do ſtill believe Vice to be very infamous; or it is a great Misfortune to them, that there is no Language in the World for them to rail at each other in, without confuting their own Philoſophy, and blemiſhing the Honour and Reputation of Vice.

And how is it poſſible that theſe Men ſhould perſwade themſelves that Vertue deſerves no Reward, nor Vice Puniſhment, when they themſelves find a kind Reſentment of all good Offices that are done them, and a great Inclination to return them, which is to reward Vertue; and when they ſuffer Injuries, they have as ſharp and quick a Senſe of Revenge, and are as reſtleſs and impatient to puniſh thoſe Injuries, as if they thought they deſerved it.

Nay, how dare they ſay, that Vertue deſerves no Reward, nor Sin Puniſhment, when in ſo ſaying they reproach all the wiſe Governments in the World, which make it a principal Care to puniſh Wickedneſs and reward Vertue, at leaſt, as far as the Peace and Security of the Government is concerned in it; and yet if theſe Rewards and Puniſhments

are not due by Nature, this is an Encroachment upon the Rights and Liberties of Nature, which I ſhould think as ſacred and inviolable as the Liberty of Conſcience which theſe Men are generally ſo zealous for.

Well! They will allow this too, that it is very fitting and neceſſary that ſome Laws ſhould be agreed on for the Preſervation and good Government of Human Societies; and that Men ſhould ſubmit their natural Liberties to the Reſtraints of Laws for the Benefit of publick Protection; but ſtill this makes no moral Difference between Good or Evil; nor any natural Deſert of Rewards and Puniſhments; but it is all owing to Human Compacts and Governments, and can reach no farther, and therefore not to another World; and as for this World, they are contented to take their Fortune in it, to uſe their natural Liberties as much as they can, and to defend themſelves againſt private Revenge and publick Juſtice as well as they can.

This is an Hypotheſis, I confeſs, which effectually deſtroys all the moral Differences of Good and Evil, and delivers Men from the Fear of God, and of the Puniſhments of the next Life; but what thin-

thinking Man can perſwade himſelf to believe this? or can ſo firmly believe it, as to give him any Security and Confidence in ſinning?

There are no Records, no Symptoms of any ſuch original Contract as this, for Mankind to give up their natural Liberties to the Reſtraints of arbitrary Laws. The general Conſent of all Nations (who had no Communication with each other) in this Diſtinction between Vertue and Vice, intimates no other Compact but that of a common Nature: And not only the wiſeſt Philoſophers, but the univerſal Voice of Mankind attribute theſe Laws to Nature, not to Human Inſtitutions: And it muſt appear ſtrange, if theſe Laws had no higher Original than Human Compacts, that Mankind for ſo many Ages ſhould not know any thing of it, but ſhould miſtake them for the Laws of Nature, as after all the Information theſe Men can give the World, the generality of Mankind do to this day.

But ſuppoſe this Diſtinction between Vertue and Vice, and thoſe Laws which command the Exerciſe of Vertue, and forbid Vice, were originally framed and enacted by Men; was there no Reaſon in the nature of things, why

they agreed upon ſuch Laws? Yes, they will grant that they were neceſſary for the Peace, and good Order and Government of Human Societies, to ſecure private Men from Injuries and Violence, and to make them helpful and beneficial to each other; and therefore they agreed to make them Laws: But why ſhould we think that God and Nature has not made thoſe Laws which have natural and neceſſary Reaſons to make them Laws? Can meer Human Compacts and Governments either make or change the Reaſons and Neceſſities of things? Can they, if they ſo pleaſed, make Vertue Vice, or Vice Vertue, and as well conſult the Happineſs of Mankind, and the good Government of the World by doing ſo? If not, then meer Human Compacts can neither make nor unmake theſe Laws. God has made theſe Laws for us, by making us ſuch Creatures, and giving us ſuch Natures as require ſuch Laws, if we will live by Nature, and attain our natural Happineſs; and who then can think that God will not as much exact from us the Obſervance of theſe Laws, as Men do? that he will not puniſh the Breach of theſe Laws, when Human Governments find it neceſſary to do ſo? And has

has God made the Reſtraints and Puniſhment of Mens Luſts and Vices neceſſary, and will he not puniſh them himſelf? eſpecially when the Authority of Human Laws and Human Government is very precarious without the Awe of Religion, as thoſe Law-givers were very ſenſible; who, to give the greater Veneration to their Laws, pretended to receive them from their Gods. It is manifeſt, that this very Hypotheſis which allows no other Difference between Vertue and Vice, but what Human Laws and Human Contracts make, leaves every Man at liberty to break theſe Laws when he can do it ſafely, or will venture the Puniſhment, which is the reaſon that makes theſe Men ſo fond of it, and ſhews how neceſſary a divine Authority is to enforce the Obligation of theſe Laws, and to ſecure the very being of Human Societies.

So that thoſe who reaſon according to the common Principles of Humane Nature, can never get rid of the Notions of moral Good and Evil, nor attribute theſe Laws to any other Author but that God who made us, and fitted our Natures to theſe Laws; and no Man who believes that God hath given us theſe Laws, can doubt whether he

will puniſh the Breach of them. But then, if to this we add the more certain Revelation of the Goſpel, wherein the *Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all Unrighteouſneſs and Ungodlineſs of Men*, this confirms all the Fears of Nature, and leaves no poſſible Hopes for Sinners, but *Repentance from dead works, and Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that it is impoſſible for Men, who know any thing of the Goſpel of Chriſt, to ſin ſecurely with their Eyes open; and therefore

2*dly*. The next ſtep they take, is to put out their Eyes, or to put out the Light; *to put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs*; to reject all the common Principles of Reaſon, and all Divine Revelation; as Ignorance, Folly, and Impoſture; But what a Task is this? to perſwade our ſelves that Darkneſs is Light, and Light Darkneſs? For the common Principles of Reaſon which Atheiſts and Infidels muſt reject, before they can deny the Being of God, or a Divine Revelation, ſhine as clear and bright in the Mind, as the Light of the Sun does in the Heavens; and the admired Principles of Atheiſm and Infidelity put out our Eyes, leave no Diſtinction between things, nor any certain Rules of

of judging; as to give ſome few Inſtances of this.

There is nothing lies more eaſie and obvious in our Minds, than the Notion of a firſt Cauſe, which gave Being to all things elſe; I will not diſpute this Point now, but alledge it as a firſt Principle, which Mankind naturally aſſent to, as the moſt reaſonable Account of the Origin of all things. Now this the Atheiſt rejects: for if they ſhould allow a Firſt Cauſe, they muſt own a God: for the firſt Cauſe of all things is a God: And this is the wiſeſt Reaſon they have againſt it, though in truth it is a great Confirmation of the natural Notion of a Firſt Cauſe; becauſe the Belief of a God is as natural and univerſal, as of a Firſt Cauſe; And theſe two Notions, which are both ſo natural to Mankind, do mutually confirm each other.

But what Account do theſe Men give of the Origin of all things? They either ſay the World is Eternal, and always was what it now is; or that Atoms were Eternal, and that the World that now is, was made by chance: But is this the natural Perſwaſion of Mankind, that the World had no Beginning and no Cauſe; or that it was made by chance? Is

Is any thing in the World harder to be believed than this, which we can form no poſſible Notion of? Nature teaches nothing of all this; and how then ſhould they come to know it? when they neither ſaw the World from Eternity, nor ſaw it made by the fortuitous Jumble of Atoms.

It is certain theſe Principles differ as Light and Darkneſs do. To aſcribe all things to a Firſt Cauſe, gives a ſenſible Account how all things were made, and how they came to be ſo wiſely made, which is Knowledge and Light: But to ſay that the VVorld was Eternal without a Cauſe, or that it was made by chance, when we ſee all things in it ſo wiſely made, only confounds and amazes us, and leaves us in Darkneſs.

Indeed all the Principles of Atheiſm and Infidelity have nothing natural or enlightning in them, but are a Force upon our Underſtandings, and deſtroy all the true Principles of Knowledge.

It is very eaſie and natural to our Minds to believe that ſomething is Eternal; for if there ever had been nothing, there never could have been any thing: But the Queſtion is, which is moſt eaſie and natural to Human Under-

derſtandings to ſay, that all things are Eternal without a Cauſe, or to aſſert one Eternal Being, who is the Cauſe of all things; and every Man may feel the difference between theſe two in his own Mind: for the Notion of a Firſt Cauſe, is as eaſie and natural as of an Eternal Being; and that natural Notion we have of the Relation and Dependance between Cauſes and Effects, neceſſarily leads us to the Belief of a Firſt Cauſe: for if all things were Eternal without a Cauſe, it is hard to conceive how there ſhould ever after be any natural Relation between them of Cauſes and Effects.; and yet deſtroy the Doctrine of Cauſes and Effects, and there is an end of all Reaſon and Diſcourſe. But then, as we have no natural Notion of the Eternity of all things, ſo all the Appearances of Nature contradict it, and will not ſuffer it to lie eaſie in our Minds. We ſee every day that all Individuals are made; Men are born every day and die; and one Generation ſucceeds another; and thus it is with Beaſts, and Birds, and all other Animals; with Trees, and Fruit, and Corn, and Herbs; and is it poſſible for any Man to believe that any of theſe things were Eternal, when we

ſee

ſee that the Individuals of all theſe ſeveral kinds of Beings are daily made: for the World conſiſts of Individuals; and if they are all made, the World was made. Neceſſary Exiſtence is Eſſential to the Notion of an Eternal Being, which has no Beginning, nor any Cauſe, and therefore muſt be always what it is, without the leaſt Change; that to aſcribe Eternity to a World, which is ſubject to perpetual Changes, is as great an Abſurdity, as to aſſert an Eternal Succeſſion without a Beginning.

Thus it is very natural to think, that the Effect can have nothing but what the Cauſe can give it; and therefore we may learn what the inviſible Cauſe is, from viſible Effects; that if we ſee any thing wiſely made, we may conclude it had a wiſe Cauſe, and therefore nothing can more contradict the natural Senſe of our Minds, than to aſcribe ſuch a World as we now live in, which diſcovers ſuch wonderful Art in its Contrivance, to blind and undeſigning Chance.

I do not diſpute theſe Matters now, but only conſider how unnatural it is to think ſo; and therefore how very difficult it is for any Man in good earneſt to eſpouſe theſe Atheiſtick Principles.

Thus

Thus as for the Principles of Infidelity, how hard is it for any Man to perſwade himſelf that God never revealed himſelf and his Will to the World any otherwiſe than by the Works of Creation, when all Mankind have believed otherwiſe, and are naturally inclined to believe ſo; and there are great Reaſons to think that God will do ſo, and none to think that he will not; eſpecially when we have ſuch evident Proof of this in Prophecy and Miracles, which ſo ſtrongly perſwade the reſt of Mankind: For to deny Prophecy and Miracles when the Matter of Fact is plain, that there have been true Prophecies or Miracles, and no Man beſides themſelves, who believes a God, doubts whether he can foretel things to come, or exerciſe a Sovereign Authority over Nature when he pleaſes, can be called by no ſofter Names than Stupidity or Impudence; and whatever they ſay, it is not ſo eaſie for them to believe what they ſay; for Prophecy and Miracles carry ſuch a Conviction with them of a Divine Power, and give ſuch Authority to the Prophet, as is not eaſily reſiſted; as is evident from hence, that ſome of the wiſeſt of theſe Men dare not deny the Authority of Prophecy

and

and Miracles, could they be aſſured o the Truth of them; but they hear no Prophecies nor ſee any Miracles now, and may be impoſed on by fabulous Relations, ſhould they be over credulous of ſuch Matters.

This would have been a good Anſwer, had they only ſome idle and uncertain Reports of ſuch things; but it can never ſatisfie themſelves when they have ſuch an Authentick Hiſtory as the Bible, the Old and New Teſtament for the Foundation of Faith. Can any Man perſwade himſelf to reject the Credit and Authority of all Hiſtories? If he can't, whatever he may pretend, he will find it a very hard matter after all his Criticiſms, to disbelieve the Goſpel, which is the beſt atteſted and moſt credible Hiſtory in the World: Theſe are the Difficulties of being an Atheiſt or Infidel, without which Men can never reject or confound the Differences of Good and Evil, that all theſe Principles contradict the natural Ideas of our Minds, and deſtroy all the natural Rules and Meaſures of Reaſon, that we can no more diſtinguiſh between Truth and Falſhood, than between Good and Evil; and if it be poſſible ever thus to efface the natural Notions of our Minds,

yet

yet it must be a very uneasie and difficult Task.

3*dly*. And yet it is at least as difficult to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Men may bribe their Understandings, but our natural Passions are not so easily stifled. When the Frame and Constitution of our Natures has annexed Shame, and Fear, and Remorse to bad Actions, which makes them very bitter and grievous in the Review, whatever they were in the Act; it is not laughing at these Fears as superstitious and owing to Education, which will cure them, no more than the Stoicks Brags that Pain was no Evil, could prevent their feeling Pain. What is painful, will make us feel it, and Atheists and Infidels themselves, when they think they have reasoned and laught away all their Fears, find that besides their frequent Misgivings and Jealousies, when any great or surprizing Occasion sets them free, these Passions return on them with such a Fury, as all their Philosophy cannot resist. Now this endangers all again; for natural Shame, and Fear, and Remorse, will make them own an Essential Difference between Good and Evil, when they feel it.

4*thly*.

4thly. But let us ſuppoſe all theſe Difficulties conquered, they are ſenſible that there is one ſtill remaining, *viz.* That all the reſt of Mankind are againſt them. The Heathen World owned a God, and as learned Men have proved, one Supream God, though they corrupted both the Notion and Worſhip of God by Polytheiſm and Idolatry: but Atheiſm was ſo infamous among them, that ſome Atheiſtick Philoſophers, ſuch as *Epicurus* himſelf, was forced to diſſemble it: They owned a moral Difference between Good and Evil; they owned Revelation, and inſtituted Religions, and had them, though not from God, yet from thoſe evil Spirits, whom they worſhipped for Gods. The whole *Jewiſh* Nation own the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets; and the whole Chriſtian World whom they are moſt at preſent concerned with, own both the Old and New Teſtament. Theſe are great Authorities againſt them, which one would think ſhould make Men modeſt, and put them a little out of countenance, and incline them to ſuſpect, that they may be miſtaken; but they are ſenſible that Modeſty would undo them, that to ſuſpect whether they are in the

the right, is as fatal to them, as to know that they are in the wrong; and therefore they have no way left, but to out-face all the World, to laugh at all the reſt of Mankind as ſuperſtitious credulous Fools; and to think themſelves the only wiſe Men in the World, to be *wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own Sight.* This indeed perfects all the reſt; and there is no help for it; for if they will contradict all Mankind, they muſt think either themſelves, or all the reſt of Mankind to be Fools.

Now I believe thoſe who are at all acquainted with the Paſſions of Human Nature, cannot think this is a very eaſie thing to deſpiſe the general Senſe of Mankind, (which at leaſt looks more like the Senſe of Nature, than the private Opinions of ſome few Philoſophers) or to ſcorn all Men for Fools and Ideots, who ever believed a God and a Providence, the moral Differences of Good and Evil, Revelation, Prophecy and Miracles. Nothing but abſolute Demonſtration can reaſonably harden a Man againſt ſuch an univerſal Conſent; and it is enough to make any Man to ſuſpect even Demonſtration it ſelf, to have all the World a-

gainſt him: For we can never think that all Mankind ſhould conſpire to reſiſt Demonſtration; and yet, by what I have already ſaid, you may eaſily perceive that they are far enough from demonſtrating the Principles of Atheiſm and Infidelity.

But beſides the general Senſe of Mankind, which they may deſpiſe as an unthinking Multitude (though the leſs of Thought and Deſign, the more there appears of Nature in ſuch a general Conſent; but I ſay, beſides this) they ſhould conſider how many very wiſe thinking Men, and great Philoſophers have in theſe Points thought as the Multitude do. I will not name *Moſes*, and the Prophets, nor Chriſt and his Apoſtles, for whom I know they have little Reverence; but what think they of *Pythagoras*, and *Plato*, and *Tully*, and *Seneca*, and *Epictetus*, and many other ſuch Men? Were they all Fools too, and yet they were neither Atheiſts, nor Infidels, and were zealous Preachers of moral Vertue.

And as for the Unthinking Multitude, as they call them, it is worth conſidering, that the greateſt Numbers of them are as wicked as they themſelves

ſelves are, or could wiſh them to be, that it is ſufficiently their intereſt to be Atheiſts and Infidels too; and yet Nature is too ſtrong for their Fears, and they believe a God, and the Difference of Good and Evil, though they believe and tremble, as the Devils do.

It is wonderful what ſhould give theſe Men ſuch Confidence to deſpiſe all the World, and I can think of no other Reaſon for it, but that they find it neceſſary; and the only way they have to be even with the World, that ſince all Mankind deſpiſe them, they will deſpiſe all Mankind: But they find this a very unequal Match, and are very uneaſie under it: For the Judgment of all Mankind is a perſwaſive Argument of the Senſe of Nature; their deſpiſing Mankind is only a Sign of Folly and Impudence. I ſhall make ſome few Obſervations on what I have ſaid, and ſo conclude.

I. I obſerve how the Love of Sin will corrupt Mens natural Senſe and Notions of Things, and blind and ſtupifie their Minds. Nothing elſe but this can make an Atheiſt or an Infidel. That there wants no Proof of the Being of God, is evident from the general Belief of Mankind; and there

is nothing in the Notion of a God, which ſhould make any Man averſe to the Belief of a God; but only his Juſtice in puniſhing Sinners; and that can make no Man afraid of believing a God, but thoſe who reſolve to live in Sin. There is no other Exception Men can take againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt, which promiſes Forgiveneſs of Sins to thoſe who repent of their Sins and reform their Lives; but that Repentance and Reformation are made the Goſpel Terms of Forgivneſs, and Hell-fire is denounced againſt impenitent Sinners.

If we conſider this before-hand, it may convince us how unnatural Sin is, and how fooliſh Sinners are, Sin can never be reconciled to the Principles of Nature, and Sinners are ſo fooliſh as to put out the Light of Nature, that they may tranſgreſs the Laws of Nature, which is a very fooliſh Deſign, to put out the Light, that we may ſin, and not know it, till we feel our ſelves eternally damned for it.

2*dly*. This may ſatisfie us how difficult a thing it is to ſin with ſecurity, much more difficult than to obey the Laws of God. It is a much eaſier thing to conquer and ſubdue our ſenſual Luſts and Appetites, by the Ar-

Arguments and Motives of Religion, by the Fear of God, and the Rewards and Puniſhments of the next Life, than it is to deliver our ſelves from the Notions of Good and Evil, from the Belief of a God and of the Goſpel of Chriſt, that if we conſult our own Eaſe and Satisfaction, it is much eaſier to be a good Man, and to be ſaved, than to live in Sin without the Fears of Damnation.

3*dly*. I obſerve how vain a thing it is to be wicked upon Principles. Men of Honour, when they know they do ſuch things as the World accounts infamous, think themſelves in Reputation bound to juſtifie them; but thoſe Principles, whereby they pretend to juſtifie their Vices, are more infamous than their Vices themſelves; as an Atheiſt, or Infidel in the Opinion of the VVorld, is a more contemptible Creature than a common Sinner.

All Men, who are liable to Temptations themſelves, have a great Compaſſion for the VVeakneſs of Human Nature; but when Men will juſtifie their Vices, and juſtifie them by renouncing God and all Religion; this ſtrikes thoſe who otherwiſe it may be, are as bad themſelves with Horror and Indignation, makes

makes wiſe Men deſpiſe them, and good Men abhor them; and I wiſh this general Contempt of them were more publick and viſible, which would either cure their Atheiſm and Infidelity, or make them more modeſt, that they ſhould not appear ſo *wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own ſight.*

4*thly.* I obſerve the irrecoverable Condition of theſe Men, who *call evil good, and good evil; who put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; who put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter; who are wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own ſight:* they have hardened themſelves beyond the ordinary Methods of God's Grace, and therefore muſt unavoidably fall under this VVo: For when Men have wilfully put out their Eyes, and ſtifled all the natural Notions of their Minds, you may as well think of converting bruit Beaſts, as of converting them. This is a miſerable hopeleſs State: VVhich God of his infinite Mercy deliver us all from, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be Honour, Glory and Power, now and for ever. Amen.

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